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ABSTRACT

Project EXCEL is a workplace literacy project involving four small business enterprises in San Francisco. Over a 19-month period, the project focused on literacy and basic skills training for 271 limited-English-proficient (LEP) workers. All training was conducted at the work sites, and a variety of support services were provided, including individual education plans, child care, educational counseling, and social service referrals. The small businesses involved included the following: a communications and mass mailing firm; a wholesale bakery; a Mexican food product manufacturer; and an outerwear design and contract manufacturer. The most outstanding accomplishments of Project EXCEL were: improved opportunities for worker advancement; increased use of English on the job; improved worker productivity; improved worker-manager relations and greater sensitivity by management to communication issues in multicultural workplaces; workers' increased interest and ability related to pursuing further literacy education; development of a viable workplace literacy model for LEP workers; development and dissemination of a modular curriculum for LEP workers in the apparel, communications, and food service industries; and the San Francisco business community's continued interest in and support for workplace literacy. The greater part of the document consists of five appendixes. They are: a rationale for using non-standard methods for student assessment; objectives of curriculum modules; sample context-based assessment test; examples of media coverage of the project; and evaluation tools. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (LB)

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Project EXCEL

March 1, 1991 -
October 31, 1992

Final Performance Report

Award Number V198A10293

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INTRODUCTION

Career Resources Development Center (CRDC) of San Francisco operated Project EXCEL, an innovative workplace literacy partnership, with four enterprises in the San Francisco Bay Area: **Momentum**, a sports apparel manufacturer, **Ace Mailing**, a communications and mass mailing firm, **Just Desserts**, a wholesale bakery company, and **Casa Sanchez**, a Mexican restaurant and food product manufacturer. Over a 19 month period, the partnership provided workplace literacy training to 271 limited English proficient (LEP) workers employed by the four small businesses. All training was conducted at the work sites, and an extensive range of support services (including individual education plans, child care, educational counseling, and social service referrals) were provided to aid in the removal of barriers frequently encountered by working adults in upgrading their skills. Project EXCEL also consulted with workplace supervisors to enable them to better understand their multicultural workforce.

Project EXCEL was staffed by Ms. Mabel Teng, Project Director; Chris Shaw and Pennie Lau, curriculum coordinators; Oscar Ramirez, Stephanie Levin-Gervasi, Lisa Lee, and Drew Westveer, instructors; and Sharon Tu, Project Coordinator. The project was also supported by Dr. Chui Lim Tsang, Executive Director of CRDC, and the accounting and administrative staff of CRDC.

Project EXCEL implemented a carefully sequenced, modular curriculum design offering the broadest possible variety of instructional options. The project maintained an instructional model that addressed clearly-articulated, workplace-generated learning outcomes.

The project involved three phases, as outlined in the following chart:

1	**Startup and Literacy Audit** *(3/15/91 - 5/31/91)*	• Intensive job-specific literacy audits were conducted • Curriculum was developed • Staff development activities were implemented.
2	**Instructional Delivery** *(5/31/91 - 10/29/92)*	• Educational modules were delivered at the four worksites • Participants were counseled on an ongoing basis • Curriculum was revised • Dissemination activities were planned.
3	**Evaluation and Dissemination** *(9/1/92 - 10/31/92)*	• Final evaluation activities were conducted • Dissemination of project products and processes were accomplished.

The objectives specifically outlined in the project proposal were:

1: The project will recruit, assess, and enroll a minimum of 300 LEP workers as project participants from the workforces of the four employer partners.

2: A minimum of 240 participants will successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction (2 "modules").

3: 100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will retain employment or be promoted.

4: 100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will show gains of at least 50% as measured by the pre-post assessment instrument to be developed through the project's literacy task analysis process.

5: 100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will show gains in supervisors' evaluations of their communication and literacy skills.

6: The project will successfully deliver a 2-level, modular curriculum at four employer worksites, 4 days per week, 1 hour per day, for a period of 54 weeks.

7: All four employer partners will actively participate in and support project activities throughout the life of the project.

8: Ongoing workplace literacy activities will be institutionalized and continued in at least 2 of the 4 employer partners' workplaces after the conclusion of federally-supported project activities.

The most outstanding accomplishments of Project EXCEL were:

- Improved opportunities for worker advancement at the four participating businesses.
- Increased usage of English on the job as a result of workers' confidence in their English language ability.
- Improved worker productivity.
- Improved worker-manager relations and sensitivity on the part of management to issues of communication in multicultural workplaces.
- Increased interest and ability on the part of adult learners in pursuing further literacy education.
- Development of a viable workplace literacy model for LEP workers, which can be replicated on a national basis.
- Development and dissemination of a modular curriculum for LEP workers in the apparel, communications, and food service industries.
- The San Francisco business community's continued interest in and support for workplace literacy.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF STATED OBJECTIVES

Recruitment, Enrollment, and Successful Completion

Two of Project EXCEL's proposed objectives pertained to its student participation:

Objective 1: *The project will recruit, assess, and enroll a minimum of 300 LEP workers as project participants from the workforces of the four employer partners.*

Objective 2: *A minimum of 240 participants will successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction (2 "modules").*

Following is a chart of the number of participants were recruited, enrolled, and who successfully completed two modules of instruction.

	Number of Students				
	Recruited	Enrolled	Completed 2 Modules	Dropped	Left the Company
Ace Mailing	74	73	72	1	0
Casa Sanchez	39	38	31	1	0
Just Desserts	64	60	53	5	0
Momentum	100	100	100	6	20
Totals:	277	271	256	13	16

**Students were temporarily laid off*

Because Project EXCEL focused on small businesses, the rate of employee layoffs and turnover was high. Most of the employees worked only on a contract basis and only reported to the business sites on days when there was work. This created two problems for retention. Some students could not attend every class session because their work schedules were sporadic, and thus could not successfully keep up to complete a module. Other students could not complete modules because they were laid off seasonally. Project EXCEL did not anticipate these seasonal layoffs during the recruitment process.

However, the efforts made to overcome these obstacles worked to achieve an 80% retention rate. To ensure that all students would have an equal chance at attending all class sessions, instructors called the business sites ahead of time to make sure that all participants had been asked to work on class days. Classes were rescheduled on days when a significant number of workers could not attend. When instructors knew that there would be a temporary lay-off, classes were delayed or interrupted until all workers returned to work. While this extended modules beyond the targeted end dates, the results were that business schedules were accommodated and workers were given every opportunity to participate in classes.

Project EXCEL as a Springboard for Further Education

Another goal of the project was that the training provided by Project EXCEL would be a basis for further education outside of the workplace. Many students were unable to enter the community college system because their English level was too low for the entry-level classes available. With accessible training at the workplace, workers were better prepared for long-term education strategies. Two participants, after starting the training provided by Project EXCEL, decided to pursue further ESL instruction and began attending evening classes at a local community college.

Commitment of Partners

Objective 7: All four employer partners will actively participate in and support project activities throughout the life of the project.

Start-Up and Task Analysis:

Managers and supervisors made company documents available to EXCEL curriculum developers. They explained workplace processes to EXCEL staff and produced specific topics and objectives for curriculum. Approximately 120 hours was contributed by employers to collaborate on Task Analysis for curriculum, equivalent to an in-kind contribution of $15,302.25.

Recruitment and Retention:

The staff at Project EXCEL found that working with direct supervisors was the best way to ensure that class schedules did not interfere with employee workloads. Supervisors at each site were involved in recruiting workers for each module and making sure that students were able to attend class.

Promotion and continuation of workplace literacy activities:

Gwen Kaplan, President of Ace Mailing, Inc. and President of the San Francisco Small Business Advisory Committee, attended a professional workplace literacy workshops in a personal effort to publicize the issues of adult workplace literacy and on-site language training programs. At a half-day seminar sponsored by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Ms. Kaplan and Project EXCEL instructor Drew Westveer led a breakout discussion group and presented a case study of Project EXCEL and Ace Mailing.

In addition to attending workplace literacy conferences, Project EXCEL's business partners continue to promote Project EXCEL's demonstration program to members of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the local Small Business Advisory Council, and other professional groups.

Business partners have also been active in promoting the program to the media, resulting in a broader base of business support for workplace literacy in San Francisco. A more detailed discussion of partner involvement in dissemination activities is given in the section on Dissemination Activities.

Continuing Workplace Literacy Education for Small Businesses in San Francisco

Objective 8: Ongoing workplace literacy activities will be institutionalized and continued in at least 2 of the 4 employer partners' workplaces after the conclusion of federally-supported project activities.

At the conclusion of the project, all business partners agreed that on-site language programs were a good idea and an asset to small business, but that it would not be feasible to continue the programs without outside funding assistance. For small businesses with limited staff and resources, the return on the investment needed to implement a workplace literacy program for a few workers is too small to justify such an monetary investment, especially when coupled with the kind of intensive in-kind commitments of worker release time and managerial consultant time.

Barbara Radcliffe, the Director of Human Resources at Just Desserts, attended the close-out conference as a business representative. As a result of the discussions at the conference, Ms. Radcliffe will continue to work with Project EXCEL to come up with creative ways to continue providing workplace literacy to workers at Just Desserts. One option being pursued is the model of forming a consortium of small businesses who can pool their resources to provide training for employees from various businesses in the same industry. Ms. Radcliffe is also participating as a business representative in a focus group on the University of California Extension Program's proposed workplace literacy certification program for the ESL and Human Resource Director credential programs.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Objective 6: The project will successfully deliver a 2-level, modular curriculum at four employer worksites, 4 days per week, 1 hour per day, for a period of 54 weeks.

Employer Worksites

The plan of operations of Project EXCEL was based on the partnership of four work sites. The project's designated partners included Momentum, a sports apparel manufacturer, and Ace Mailing, a communications and mass mailing firm. Two additional partners originally slated to participate in the program withdrew their participation. Project EXCEL then added two work sites to take their place: Casa Sanchez, a family-owned manufacturer and wholesaler of tortilla chips, salsa, and other Mexican food items, and Just Desserts, a successful wholesale bakery and retail company. Service delivery commenced at these partners once they were approved by the Department of Education.

Schedule of service delivery

Project EXCEL proposed to deliver six modules of instruction per site. Each module would last 6 weeks. Two levels of instruction were to be offered at each site: a Basic Workplace Literacy sequence of 3 modules followed by an Intermediate Workplace Literacy sequence of three modules. The Instructional Delivery Phase was to last a total of 54 weeks.

The project was able to successfully deliver a complete program of modules at each participating site despite the unanticipated extent to which workload impeded the workers' ability to participate. Since production schedules fluctuated, workers at the small businesses were often contracted for hourly work or piecework. When there was no work because employees were not called in. When there was a production deadline or a surplus of work, employers could not afford to give employees release time. As a result, classes were often canceled. To overcome these obstacles to student participation, modules were extended to compensate for missed class time. Breaks between modules were either eliminated or extended. As a result, students were given every opportunity to receive comprehensive training with schedules which accommodated their workloads.

Calendar of Service Delivery

On the following page is a summary of the modules, dates of instruction, and hours of instruction provided at each of the participating work sites.

Project EXCEL Calendar of Service Delivery

COMPANY	MODULE	DATES	WKS	HRS/WK
Ace Mailing	1: Ace Basics	06/04/91 - 07/11/91 07/16/91 - 08/29/91	5 6	3 3
	2: Stuff it, Seal it, Sort it, and Send it (2-track)	10/17/91 - 12/13/91 02/27/92 - 04/10/92	5 6	2 2
	3: Getting the Job Done	09/03/91 - 12/18/91	10	3
	4: May I Help You?	02/24/92 - 04/08/92	6	3
	5: Post Office Forms/Review	04/20/92 - 08/19/92	6	3
	6: Pronunciation at Ace Mailing	04/23/92 - 08/14/92	6	2
Casa Sanchez	1: Basics of Customer Service	10/07/91 - 11/13/91	6	2
	2: Solving Problems on the Job	11/18/91 - 12/23/91	6	2
	3: What's a Good Worker?	01/06/92 - 02/12/92	6	2
	4: Greater Relations, Greater Productivity	02/17/92 - 03/25/92	6	2
	5: Overcoming Obstacles at Work	03/30/92 - 05/6/92	6	2
Just Desserts	1: Bakery Vocabulary and Instructions	07/15/91 - 08/28/91	7	2
	2: Bakery Know-How	09/04/91 - 10/09/91	5	2
	3: Safe and Sweet: Safety Rules, Order Forms and Bake Sheets	03/23/92 - 05/06/92	7	2
	4: A Spoonful of Sugar: Ingredients and Measurements	05/27/92 - 07/15/92 *(2 sections taught)*	6 6	3 3
	5: Ingredients and Processes	07/31/92 - 09/09/92	6	2
	6: Work Evaluations	07/28/92 - 09/04/92	6	2
Momentum	1: A Fashionable Beginning	08/12/91 - 09/20/91	6	5
	2: A Stitch of Common Sense	09/30/91 - 11/18/91	6	5
	3: Can You Help Me with Fractions?	11/18/91 - 01/16/92	8	5
	4: Doing My Job	01/27/92 - 02/27/92	5	4
	5: Piecing it all together	03/23/92 - 05/28/92	7	4
	6: Review	08/17/92 - 10/29/92	11	2

PROJECT EXCEL PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Project EXCEL: LEP Worker-Participants Profile

	ACE MAILING	CASA SANCHEZ	JUST DESSERTS	MOMEN-TUM	TOTALS: #	%
Number of workers	73	38	60	100	271	
Male	11	37	57	0	105	39
Female	62	1	3	100	166	61
Age						
Under 20	11	12	13	0	36	13
20-30	18	16	34	9	77	28
30-40	12	10	10	18	50	19
Over 40	32	0	3	73	108	40
Native Language						
Spanish	47	38	57	1	143	53
Chinese	0	0	0	99	99	37
Tagalog	25	0	0	0	25	9
Other	1	0	3	0	4	1
Education Level						
None	0	0	0	7	7	3
Elementary	1	13	17	47	78	29
High School	39	12	33	44	128	47
College	33	13	10	2	58	21
*ESL,Community College**	*54*	*20*	*13*	*59*	*146*	*54*
Years in U.S.						
Under 5 years	43	27	47	57	168	62
5-10 years	16	7	8	27	58	21
Over 10 years	14	4	5	22	45	17
Salary (per hour)						
Minimum Wage	42	12	0	29	83	31
Minimum Wage - $5.00	8	0	6	68	82	30
$5.00 - $8.00	21	12	32	0	65	24
Over $8.00	2	14	22	3	41	15

**ESL classes taken in the United States in addition to previous education.*

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PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Workplace Outcomes: Job Retention and Advancement

Objective 3: *100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will retain employment or be promoted.*

All participants who successfully completed two modules of training have retained employment. Three participants were promoted within their companies. One participant found employment at a higher skill level job at another company. One participant made a lateral transfer within his company.

Educational Outcomes: Gains in Literacy Skills

Project EXCEL hoped measure gains in the students' literacy skills as a result of the curricula and instruction presented by the project. By making the curricula specific to the workplace the project could then test students on their ability to communicate by using those workplace functions which we determined to be most significant. In this way instructors hoped to measure those linguistic gains which were most helpful to the learners' work performance. The objective stated in the proposal was as follows.

Objective 4: *100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will show gains of at least 50% as measured by the pre-post assessment instrument to be developed through the project's literacy task analysis process.*

Because of the factors previously mentioned as barriers to student retention (erratic work schedules, seasonal lay-offs, fluctuating work loads), it was difficult to consistently implement pre- and post-tests. For instance, students often missed the sessions in which pre-tests were administered, and it was difficult to schedule extra times for students to make up the tests. At the end of classes students were intimidated by assessment tests and sometimes skipped class sessions which involved pencil and paper tests.

Considering these and other similar observations, instructors found that gains in linguistic and communication skills were better measured through non-traditional (i.e., non-pencil-and-paper) means, such as observing the adult learner's ability to perform tasks and follow oral and written instructions. (A detailed rationale for Project EXCEL's more comprehensive approach to assessment can be found in Appendix A.)

The conclusion of the various methods of assessing learner improvement was that adult learners who participated in EXCEL's program successfully accomplished the objectives of each module. These goals specifically addressed issues of understanding written and verbal instructions, performing complex tasks on the job, and being able to communicate and report problems. (Refer to Appendix B for module objectives.)

Case Study: Just Desserts

Project EXCEL's program at Just Desserts is the most complete example of the various assessment measures used by the project's instructors and curriculum developers. Student progress was assessed with standardized tests, customized pencil-and-paper tests, functional tests, and teacher observation.

Use of Standardized Tests

While Project EXCEL did not implement standardized testing to measure gains in literacy, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and Basic English Skills Test (BEST) were administered to project participants at Just Desserts for the purposes of determining the workers' overall language skill levels. The results of these tests were used to develop a curriculum and plan of instruction best suited to the communication needs of the workers. In June 1991, the CASAS and BEST tests were administered to the 17 employees of the Just Desserts bakery who signed up for classes. Prior to the tests, the 17 employees were divided into two groups of different ESL levels based on interviews and managers/supervisors' evaluation. CASAS listening (L51) and reading (R31) tests were given to the basic ESL level group, while BEST was given to the advanced ESL group. Following are the results of those tests:

CASAS	L51	L52	R31	R32
Student 1	196	206	199	invalid*
Student 2	185	202	177	199
Student 3	189	202	188	192
Student 4	186	201	186	202
Student 5	195	196	188	186
Student 6	196	206	199	invalid*
Student 7	189	192	196	192

**Score fell off the valid range on the high side.*

BEST	B Listening, communication and fluency		C Listening, communication and fluency	
	Total	Reading/Writing	Total	Reading/Writing
Student 8	66	37/28	71	40/26
Student 9	44	28/19	71	31/26
Student 10	76	41/25	79	46/28
Student 11	50	38/23	72	44/25

Use of content-based testing instruments

Project instructors developed their own testing instruments to assess workers' linguistic gains. Following the standardized tests was a pre-test given on the first day of class. This test was developed by instructors based on the content of the curriculum to be taught, and functioned as both a pre-test and post-test. (Please refer to Appendix C for a sample of the test developed.)

The pre- and post-tests of Modules 1 and 2 at Just Desserts were given to the CASAS test group who attended the first two modules of class. The content was based on the curriculum taught in those modules, and the tests required listening, reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Each question was given one to five scores based on the difficulty and required skills, the total score being 100. The purpose of the test was to measure the students' achievement of work-specific language skills taught in class. Following is a chart of the test results for those students who also took the standard CASAS tests:

	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 1	72	93
Student 2	12	88
Student 3	59	80
Student 4	63	83
Student 5	52	85
Student 6	77	83
Student 7	45	68

Instructors' observations

The following observations apply for Just Desserts but are representative of the kinds of progress observed across sites. All of these accomplishments demonstrated students' mastery of curriculum objectives.

Instructors at Just Desserts observed that after a few modules of instruction, students spoke English to each other more frequently in class. They were more willing to engage in complete interactions in English in order to clarify, question, and instruct. Students who began their training with no idea of how to take a test were able, at the end of their training, to understand written questions and respond appropriately either by performing the requested task, offering suitable verbal responses, or providing written answers.

Instructors also spent time observing their students at work and noted that the number of interactions conducted in English increased as students gained confidence in their language ability. Instructors also observed that while they began as intermediaries between students and their supervisors, as the classes progressed students depended less on instructors and took more initiative to clarify issues directly with their supervisors.

Competency Outcomes: Gains in Language Usage on the Job

Objective 5: 100% of the participants who successfully complete 12 weeks of instruction will show gains in supervisors' evaluations of their communication and literacy skills.

By the end of the program supervisors at all four business agreed that there was a noticeable improvement in the level of English communication of their workers. On surveys administered to supervisors at each workplace, 100% of respondents said that workers language skills had improved a great deal.

At Ace Mailing, one supervisor related an incident where an employee had reported a mistake in a job order. The manager believed that Project EXCEL's training directly contributed to the worker's awareness of her work, enabling her to read the job order and ask questions to clarify instructions when in doubt. According to the manager, the error would have cost the company thousands of dollars and it would have taken a long time to regain the client company's confidence. The employee saved money and face for Ace Mailing. Moreover, she inspired the management to consider establishing a "worker of the month" system as an incentive to all of its employees.

At Momentum, the CEO reported that his workers were greeting him in English and that they were more willing to volunteer information directly to him instead of going through a bilingual floor supervisor. He valued this improvement in employee-supervisor relations, citing the benefits of increased worker input, decreased mistakes on the job, and increased independence of workers.

Just Desserts is in the midst of expanding its operations and its market. Successful expansion requires a workforce that is able to work efficiently and to communicate and understand the value of its product. For most workers at Just Desserts, the only barrier to increased responsibility and contribution to the company was a lack of ability to communicate in English. According to managers and line supervisors at Just Desserts, the training provided by Project EXCEL has helped upgraded the language levels of its workforce, enabling the company to promote workers from within and to better utilize its highly skilled workers. For example, two students who were dishwashers at the outset of training were promoted to the advanced positions of baking and frosting as a result of their mastery of bakery terminology, safety rules, language functions (such as confirming and clarifying given instructions) and reading and writing functions (such as writing short notes or memos).

At Casa Sanchez, the owner was consistently impressed with the curriculum written for the classes. The curriculum included discussions of key marketing issues such as negotiating for better shelf space and handling difficult customer requests. The workers became increasingly aware of the key role of language in their interactions with customers in the restaurant or clients on their delivery routes. The owner has often shared the class curriculum with business associates and has recommended the workplace literacy program to other businesses.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Published Curricula

Curriculum has been printed for a total of 23 modules covering four worksites. Copies of curricula have been distributed to supervisors, managers and personnel directors at each worksite. Following is a list of the modules printed:

ACE MAILING, INC.
- Module 1, "Ace Basics"
- Module 2, "Stuff it, Seal it, Sort it, and Send it"
- Module 3, "Getting the Job Done"
- Module 4, "May I Help You?"
- Module 5, "Forms Made Easy"
- Module 6, "Special Delivery: Pronunciation at Work"

JUST DESSERTS, INC.
- Module 1, "Bakery Vocabulary and Instructions"
- Module 2, "Bakery Know-How"
- Module 3, "Safe and Sweet: Safety Rules, Order Forms and Bake Sheets"
- Module 4, "Ingredients and Processes"
- Module 5, "Work Evaluations"
- Module 6, "Understanding Meeting Minutes"

CASA SANCHEZ, INC.
- Module 1, "Basics of Customer Service"
- Module 2, "Solving Problems on the Job"
- Module 3, "What's a Good Worker?"
- Module 4, "Greater Relations, Greater Productivity"
- Module 5, "Overcoming Obstacles at Work"
- Module 6, "Program Review"

MOMENTUM, INC.
- Module 1, "A Fashionable Beginning"
- Module 2, "A Stitch of Common Sense"
- Module 3, "Can you help me with fractions?"
- Module 4, "Doing My Job"
- Module 5, "Piecing it all together"

Public Relations and Professional Participation

Project EXCEL's Project Director, instructors, curriculum developers, program coordinator, and business partners have made numerous presentations to educational and commercial associations. At all of these presentations curricula was distributed to participants.

Project Director Mabel Teng has made presentations on workplace literacy to the Chinese Merchants Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Small Business Advisory Committee. As a result of these presentations, the business community of San Francisco was more aware of the need for workplace literacy education for the city's labor force. The project has received calls from businesses and organizations who have adopted the idea of workplace literacy and who are discussing ways to support and promote the model put forth by Project EXCEL. Ms. Teng also introduced Project EXCEL's model to the San Francisco Community College as part of the Flex Day Workshops in August of 1991.

The project's curriculum developers Pennie Lau and Chris Shaw have presented papers and case studies at Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) conferences, contributing new ideas and valuable data to the field of workplace literacy. These presentations include the California TESOL Conference in April, 1991; the National TESOL Convention in March, 1992; and the CABE Conference in March, 1992.

Pennie Lau and instructor Oscar Ramirez also presented a case study on the Project EXCEL model to a forum on On-Site Language Instruction in a Multicultural Workplace in September, 1992. This presentation was well received by the businesses and workplace literacy providers in attendance, and resulted in local media coverage of Project EXCEL. As mentioned before, instructor Drew Westveer presented a case study with EXCEL business partner Gwen Kaplan at an ASTD Conference in October, 1992.

Each instructor has spent an extensive amount of time visiting classes or hosting students of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs. Project EXCEL instructors have developed an effective presentation about the innovative workplace literacy methods used here and have reached over 200 students and teachers who are interested in careers in workplace literacy. Project EXCEL staff is often called upon to share their expertise with classes at San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, and the University of California.

Project EXCEL staff has also made use of the growing network of workplace literacy providers in the San Francisco Bay Area. Among the forums and conferences attended by EXCEL staff are: Cultural Diversity in the Workforce forum sponsored by Golden Gate University; an Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) Regional Workshop on the topics of workplace literacy and ESL; a Literacy Forum sponsored by the Mission Community College Center of San Francisco; a Northern

California TESOL Conference; the Rocky Mountain Regional TESOL VII Conference; the Adult Literacy Instructors' Training Institute (ALIT); monthly Santa Clara County Workplace Literacy Support Group Meetings sponsored by OTAN; and a workshop on Teaching ESL in Multi-Level Classrooms sponsored by the Santa Clara Adult Education Cabrillo Center.

Recognized by local businesses and universities as a leader in the field of workplace literacy, Project EXCEL is making its experience and knowledge available to other businesses in the San Francisco Bay Area. Capitalizing on the networking accomplished at the above-mentioned business and educational conferences, Project EXCEL has collaborated with the Center for Working Life to sponsor a workplace literacy support group for the San Francisco area. As project staff participated in a workplace literacy support group in San Jose it became clear that such a support group was needed for San Francisco. When the Center for Working Life received a grant to set up such a support group, CRDC was asked to be a co-sponsor because of Project EXCEL's established reputation as experts and innovators in the field of workplace literacy.

Project EXCEL has also received regular and extensive media coverage of its programs. The articles assembled in Appendix D include coverage by trade publications and educational journals as well as coverage by the San Francisco Chronicle. The following articles can be found in the appendix:

Educational Journals

- Henze, Rosemary and Katz, Anne. "What is the Relationship Between Workplace Literacy and Content-Based Instruction?", *The CATESOL Journal*, April 1992, pp. 93-96.

Business and Trade Publications

- Erickson, Pam. "The New Immigrants: how to tap their skills", *Modern Baking*, March, 1992, pp. 52-56.
- Small Business Advisory Commission. "Small Businesses Send School to Employees", *SBAC News*, Fall 1991.
- "Ace Mailer", *San Francisco Business*, May 1991, p. 17.

San Francisco Chronicle

- Sullivan, Kathleen. "Taking pains with workers' English", *San Francisco Examiner*, Tuesday, September 29, 1992, Business Section.
- Sullivan, Kathleen. "English On the Job", *San Francisco Examiner*, Sunday, November 15, 1992, Business Section, pp. E1-E7.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

An external evaluator, Dr. David Hemphill, was involved in monitoring the project during the time the service was being provided. Dr. Hemphill was very familiar with the proposed goals of the project and developed appropriate assessment tools to address these objectives.

In addition to Dr. Hemphill's extensive interviews with Project EXCEL instructors and staff, surveys were administered to workers, supervisors, and company contacts to measure the impact of the training on employee performance and workplace communication. Surveys measured the communication skills and amount of English usage at the workplace as perceived by workers and their supervisors. The procedure for administering surveys was as follows:

1. **Worker Productivity Self-Assessment** surveys administered to each worker at the start of their involvement with the project. Supervisors filled out a corresponding **Supervisor's Assessment of Worker Productivity** for each worker at the start of the worker's involvement with the project.

2. At the end of a worker's participation in the project, the same productivity assessment forms were administered to workers and supervisors to measure the changes in attitudes or perceptions about a worker's productivity as a possible result of training.

3. At the end of the training at each site, an **Overall Program Survey** was given to the main contact at each site (usually the company president or human resources director).

4. Also at the end of training, instructors interviewed classes as a group (using the **Worker Group Interview Form**) and interviewed supervisors individually (using the **Supervisor Interview Form**) to gain insight to their impressions of the program's impact on workplace dynamics.

Samples of these evaluation forms and interview tools can be found in Appendix E.

CHANGES IN KEY PERSONNEL

There are no changes in key personnel. However, in June 1992 the project hired another Instructor (0.5 FTE) and a Program Coordinator (1.0 FTE). This was in accordance with approved usage of budgeted salaries.

Appendix A

Rationale for using non-standard methods for student assessment

APPENDIX A

USING NON-STANDARD METHODS TO ASSESS STUDENT PROGRESS
Pennie Lau, Curriculum Coordinator, Project EXCEL

1. **Standardized tests invalidate a workplace specific curriculum.**

   A workplace specific curriculum is designed to cover very specific and discrete work related competencies. It is not designed to directly enhance and improve a worker's global competence in general work skills and communication.

2. **A standardized pencil and paper test lacks content validity.**

   A standardized test does not actually involve the testee in a sample of behavior that is being measured. If we want to test our workers' ability to handle difficult guest requests, a pen and paper test would not actually engage the testee in a sample of behavior that we are trying to test. An activity which engages the testee in an actual conversation with a guest (or hypothetical guest) with a difficult request would have more validity.

3. **A general standardized test lacks face validity.**

   A test has face validity when it appears to the testee to measure what it is designed to measure. Face validity is very important from the learner's perspective. A learner needs to be convinced that the test is indeed testing what it claims to test. A general standardized test of English grammar does not have face validity for a group of workers who have just gone through a curriculum on baking competencies.

4. **A standardized test lacks construct validity.**

   A test has construct validity if and when the results of the test meet or validate the objectives of the set curriculum. Standardized tests may not tap into the theoretical construct of the course defined by the curriculum developer. The developer sets very specific objectives on what the curriculum should do for the learner, and general standardized tests do not measure the extent to which these objectives were met.

5. **Workers who have been away from the academic setting or who have not had any formal education may not be familiar with a paper and pencil evaluational format (i.e., fill in the bubble, "all/none of the above", etc.)**

Test taking is a skill that many LEP workers may not have. A curriculum specific test can lower test taking anxiety because it can include activities to which the workers have been previously exposed. Workers should not be subjected to testing activities and exercises to which they have never been exposed.

6. **Results of a standardized test require special knowledge to interpret.**

   Managers and supervisors at workplaces (our clients) may not have the knowledge to make accurate interpretations of test results. They may find it easier to interpret the results of a curriculum specific test because they have a stake in setting some of the curriculum and testing objectives.

7. **An evaluation process that includes only a standardized pencil and paper exam ignores invaluable data that speaks specifically to workplace achievement.**

   Frequent informal and intuitive testing measures performed by Project EXCEL's teachers in the classrooms suggest gains in learners' competencies which are outside the parameters of standardized tests.

8. **In a multi-level classroom, students may not fall within the range of proficiency that the standardized test targets.**

   Multi-level classrooms which include pre- and non-literate students are the norm in workplace literacy. Most standardized tests assume students have basic English literacy (the ability to read and comprehend discourse written with the English alphabet), which is not the case for many Project EXCEL participants.

9. **A standardized pencil and paper test would not tap into the very objectives needed to achieve a workplace specific curriculum.**

   Curricula written for a workplace literacy program takes on a task based focus, aiming to improve workers' ability to comprehend and carry out instructions. These functions are not tested by standardized tests.

10. **It is difficult to prove the reliability of a test (standardized or customized) in a workplace literacy program.**

    Workplace literacy instructors rarely teach a similar group of students from an equivalent proficiency level on an identical topic twice. It is therefore difficult to substantiate the reliability of a test over time and across several groups of students.

Appendix B

Objectives of Curriculum Modules

ACE MAILING, INC.	
Module 1	Ace Basics
Module 2	Stuff it, Seal it, Sort it, and Send it
Module 3	Getting the Job Done
Module 4	May I Help You?
Module 5	Forms Made Easy
Module 6	Special Delivery: Pronunciation at Work

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OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 1

Module 1 is designed to familiarize Ace Mailing employees with classroom instruction and procedures, review the basic components of written English and the numeric system, introduce the importance of casual communication in the workplace, and help workers follow and respond to instructions with emphasis on confirming and asking for clarification when communication breakdowns occur. The aim of the activities in this module is to enable workers to feel more comfortable in a classroom setting, encourage workers to initiate and respond to casual interpersonal exchanges at work, and follow instructions with greater ease and efficiency.

Students will be able to:

1. Read and write English alphabets in upper and lower case forms.
2. Read, write and comprehend numbers.
3. Make personal contact with co-workers and staff: greetings and small talk.
4. Ask and respond to personal information questions.
5. Fill out a simple personal information form.
6. Confirm information and ask for clarification.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 2

This module is designed to develop practical job communication skills to enable an employee to perform responsibly and productively on the job. The lessons emphasize how to avoid misunderstandings by learning to listen to instructions, confirm them, or ask for clarifications when necessary. They also make the employee familiar with many of the key aspects of instructions-- location, sequence of events, action words etc. Finally, employees learn polite or typical manners of speech for making requests and confirming/giving instructions.

The material in this module has been designed for students at the low beginning/intermediate level (ESL 100 level).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Asking for locations.
2. Confirming given locations.
3. Taking and giving instructions.
4. Giving sequential instructions.
5. Making polite requests.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 3

This module is designed to help employees develop communication skills and strategies to improve job performance. The emphasis is on problem solving and reporting problems. Students will develop skill in identifying and reporting problems to supervisors. They will be able to discuss work performance and develop solutions to problems. Lastly, they will have a better understanding along with the capability to identify and discuss safety rules and regulations.

The material has been designed for students at the high beginning/low intermediate level (ESL 100-200 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Report typical problems students have at work.
2. Ask co-workers/supervisor for help in solving the problem.
3. Report work completion.
4. Ask for more work.
5. Ask if work is correct.
6. Ask for explanation of incorrect work.
7. Ask about safety rules.
8. Explain safety instructions.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 4

Module 4 is designed to help Ace Mailing limited English proficient (LEP) employees develop communication skills and strategies to provide customers with appropriate services. The emphasis in this module is on greeting customers and explaining supervisor's or manager's absences in person as well as on the phone. They will also develop skills in handling customer requests and in taking phone messages.

Specifically, students will be able to:

1. greet customers properly,
2. offer help to customers,
3. handle customers' requests,
4. explain supervisor's/manager's absences appropriately,
5. take a message in person and on the phone.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 5

Ace Mailing Module 6 encompasses post office forms. It is primarily concerned with the student making the leap from inserting and sorting mail to filling out the three most frequently used bulk business mailing forms. Students will familiarize themselves with the format and vocabulary shared in all the three forms, using their experience on the job. They will practice, using real forms obtained from the post office, and individually and independently fill out different sections of the form. Lastly, they will be able to correctly calculate postage at a variety of rates.

The material has been designed for students at the intermediate level (ESL 300-400 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Recognize the format of forms for bulk business mailing.
2. Differentiate different requirements and functions of each form.
3. Fill in information in all sections.
4. Perform accurate postage computation.
5. Fill out appropriate forms for different job orders.

Post office forms covered in the module:

1. PS Form 3602-N
   Statement of Mailing with Permit Imprints
   Third-Class Mail (Nonprofit Rates Only)
2. PS Form 3602-R
   Statement of Mailing with Permit Imprints
   Third-Class Mail (Regular Rates Only)
3. PS Form 3602-PC
   Statement of Mailing with Meter or Precanceled Postage Affixed
   Bulk Third-Class Mail (Regular or Nonprofit Rates)

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 6

All of the modules in this series were designed to help employees of ACE Mailing develop communication skills and strategies to improve job performance. Effective communication on the job involves not only understanding co-workers and supervisors but being understood. This module provides exercises to assess and practice areas of difficulty in pronunciation. The exercises are set within a contextual framework that is familiar to the students and will ideally provide them the opportunity to transfer what they learn from the classroom to the workplace.

The specific objectives of this module are to:

1. identify sounds and combinations of sounds that are difficult for students to pronounce.

2. isolate these sounds in a series of *Listen and Repeat* exercises.

3. introduce words from the workplace that contain these sounds.

4. provide pronunciation practice in the form of a contextual, workplace-based dialogue.

JUST DESSERTS, INC.

Module 1	Bakery Vocabulary and Instructions
Module 2	Bakery Know-How
Module 3	Safe and Sweet: Safety Rules, Order Forms and Bake Sheets
Module 4	Ingredients and Processes
Module 5	Work Evaluations
Module 6	Understanding Meeting Minutes

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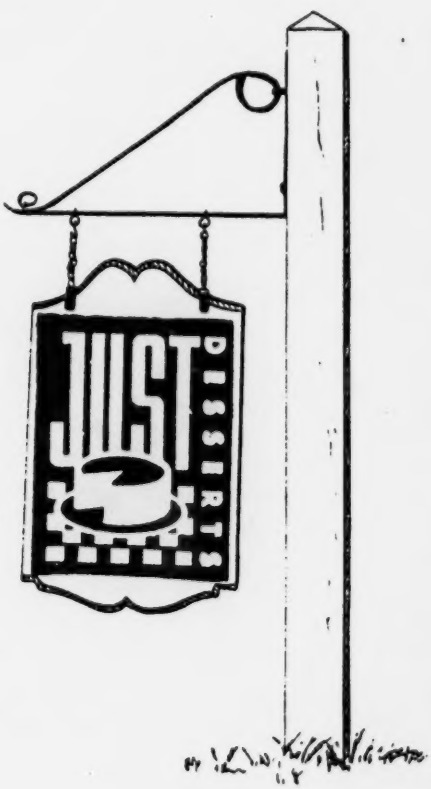
OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 1

Module 1 is designed to familiarize Just Desserts kitchen employees with bakery vocabulary and instructions. The lessons are aimed at developing work maturity and communication skills to enable an employee to perform productively and responsibly. In addition, this module introduces the concept of the American working culture by encouraging workers to ask questions when they don't understand, and to ask for clarifications when they are not certain.

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. understanding bakery vocabulary and simple instructions,
2. confirming given instructions,
3. calling to report late or absence,
4. making requests for help,
5. pointing out (potential) problems or mistakes.



OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 2

Module 1 is designed to familiarize Just Desserts kitchen employees with extended bakery vocabulary and expressions including measurements for reading and comprehending recipes as well as special order sheets and for understanding complicated oral instructions. The lessons are aimed at developing communication and reading skills to enhance performance. In addition, this module introduces the concept of "If" and the concept of "more" to enable the employees to perform even more productively and responsibly.

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. understanding bakery vocabulary and complicated instructions ("more"),
2. understanding situations of a conditional nature ("IF"),
3. giving feedback on company products,
4. understanding company recipes and special orders,
5. initiating small talk with colleagues.

The material in this module has been designed for students at the high beginning/intermediate level (ESL 200-300).

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 3

Module 3 is designed to help Just Desserts employees develop a greater awareness and increased knowledge of possible safety hazards and the safety rules used at their jobs. Furthermore, the module also provides practice in writing memos and reading and filling out work order forms. In addition, the module also stresses identifying problems and making suggestions for avoiding safety hazards at work, thus emphasizing analytical thinking skills.

The material has been designed for students at the low intermediate level of ESL learning (200-300 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of safety in the workplace.

2. The verb **to hurt** and other "accident verbs"; possessive adjectives; the irregular past tenses of some "accident verbs".

3. The importance of asking for permission to operate certain equipment and of reporting accidents.

4. Review of specific safety rules related to the workers' job site.

5. Identifying, analyzing, and finding solutions for safety hazards and accidents at work.

6. Months of the year, days of the week, and the writing of dates on company materials.

7. Reading and/or writing work-related memos, instructions, and order sheets; understanding company computer printouts and abbreviations used in them.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 4

Module 4 was designed to assist the bakery workers at Just Desserts achieve greater competence in one general area: achieving a greater knowledge of ingredients used on a regular basis at their workplace and the measurements and processes through which these ingredients are put.

This material has been designed for students at the low intermediate level of ESL learning (i.e., the 200-300 level).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. A more thorough introduction or review of all the most commonly used ingredients at the bakery: fruits, nuts, some vegetables, greases, powders, liquids, spices, etc..
2. To review which desserts require which ingredients.
3. To familiarize the students with some American English idioms in which the names of these ingredients appear, so as to practice more spoken English.
4. To begin distinguishing fine differences in different types of ingredients that come from the same general group.
5. To introduce the workers to the different processes which the ingredients are put to when being used for making desserts (cubing, slicing, sugaring, etc.).
6. To review and practice the most commonly used weights and measures involved in the processing of ingredients employed at the workplace, including the differences and similarities between systems of measures and weights (decimal vs. pound-based).
7. To work with recipes used at the actual workplace in determining the amount of batter needed for certain desserts; the decoding of and computing involved in said recipe forms.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 5

Module 5 was designed to assist **Just Desserts** workers in one general area: to attain an increased understanding of the employee evaluation forms that are used by their company to judge their performance. The Module also attempts to further acculturate the workers by reviewing which work values are required in the American work culture and by analyzing how these values that may not necessarily be shared by the cultures from which the workers come.

This material has been designed for students at the low intermediate level of ESL learning (i.e., the 200-300 level).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. To introduce the workers to the vocabulary used in performance evaluation forms employed at their workplace;
2. To acquaint them with the formatting of said forms and related ranking symbols and categories.
3. To familiarize the workers with the American work culture and its system of work ethics (values and criteria).
4. To relate the American work ethic to the workers' performance evaluation forms;
5. To contrast the above with the workers' native work cultures.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 6

This is the last module for LEP employees at Just Desserts bakery. The main topic of this curriculum is comprehending written meeting minutes which in themselves recycle all the vocabulary and job-related materials already covered in the previous modules. Specific reading skills such as reading headers, bold-faced and italic words, first sentence of each paragraph, and making a meaningful guess in the context are individually taught and constantly reinforced in different reading activities. Moreover, the use of a bilingual dictionary, a English-Spanish Spanish-English one for the LEP group at Just Desserts, is also introduced in order to better equip the learner with future self study capabilities once this last module comes to an end.

The material in this module has been designed for students at the intermediate level (ESL 300-400).

Specific objectives are as follows.

1. Pre-read meeting minutes.
2. Select, read and understand important sections in meeting minutes.
3. Ask for meaning, definition, or translation.
4. Guess meaning in the context.
5. Use a bilingual dictionary.

CASA SANCHEZ, INC.	
Module 1	Basics of Customer Service
Module 2	Solving Problems on the Job
Module 3	What's a Good Worker?
Module 4	Greater Relations, Greater Productivity
Module 5	Overcoming Obstacles at Work
Module 6	Program Review

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Objectives of Module 1

Module 1 is designed to help Casa Sanchez employees develop communication skills and strategies to perform productively and responsibly on the job. The emphasis in this module is on providing good customer service when Casa Sanchez drivers meet with storekeepers at different sales locations. The drivers will develop skills in handling customer complaints/requests as well as making polite requests themselves.

Students will be able to:

1. name the products they deliver in English.
2. identify and describe problems associated with the products they sell.
3. recognize and comprehend common storekeepers' complaints.
4. respond appropriately to store keepers' complaints.
5. handle store keepers' requests appropriately.
6. make polite requests.
7. recognize and understand the concept of "mark-ups" in pricing products.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 2

This module is designed to help LEP employees develop problem solving skills and strategies to improve job performance. The emphasis is on problem solving and communicating with customers. Students will develop skills in identifying and reporting problems to managers, pointing out possible causes of problems, making suggestions, and negotiating with customers.

The material has been designed for students at the high beginning to intermediate level (ESL 100-300 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Identify common problems on the job and point out possible causes of the problems.
2. Recognize different degrees of importance of problems.
3. Report typical problems students have at work.
4. Make suggestions or provide input for problem solving.
5. Negotiate with store or restaurant personnel appropriately.
6. Understand the importance of providing quality customer service.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 3

Module 3 is designed to help Casa Sánchez employees to develop a greater knowledge of cultural aspects of workers' performance. Specific topics dealt with herein include the importance of punctuality, non-verbal communication, ethical behavior at work, and benefits to which employees are entitled in the U.S. as well as what American employers expect of their workers.

The material has been designed for students at the high beginning or low intermediate level (ESL 100-200 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Personal introductions and small talk about home and work.
2. Use of non-verbal communication such as eye contact and gestures.
3. The cultural importance of time in the U.S.; excuses for lateness and absences; and the significance of punctuality and deadlines.
4. Attributes that make for a good worker, plus review and expansion of related adjectives.
5. Cultural differences in work ethics between the U.S. and other countries; plus reality and myth in the "Protestant Work Ethic".
6. Benefits that U.S. workers are entitled to and expectations that most American employers have of their employees.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 4

Module 4 is designed primarily to help Casa Sánchez employees develop greater facility in writing memos and brief business letters related to "giving notice" at work. It also stresses the cultural importance of good social relations among workers, their interdependence as it affects their productivity, as well as the significance of being flexible and versatile at work, and clear in understanding complicated job instructions.

The material has been designed for students at the low intermediate level of ESL studies (levels 200-300).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Clarifying and giving complicated instructions.
2. Cultural and economic importance of flexiblity and versatility on the job in the U.S..
3. Verbal and written "giving notice" to employers for lateness and absences; writing of brief business letters for same.
4. Parts of the body and common medical conditions as they relate to lateness to and absences from work; review of possessive adjectives used in conjunction with parts of the body.
5. Asking to speak or consult with management; cultural importance of choosing the most appropriate moment.
6. Good social relations on the job and their effect on the company's productivity; teamwork in American companies; plus effect of other workers' job conduct on the employees' productivity for good or ill.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 5

This module groups different aspects of working in the food industry which may prove to be challenging or personally dangerous to the employees. Some aspects involve work habits, others involve experiencing the prejudice that comes from stereotypes held by some customers, while others involve mistakes commonly made in the food industry plus safety hazards and prevention typical in that industry.

The material has been designed for students at the high beginning and low intermediate levels (ESL 300-400 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Reading and understanding performance evaluation forms.
2. Understanding the managerial mentality that goes into assessing workers' strengths in the American workplace.
3. Examining the nature of prejudice and stereotypes in general, including race, ethnicity, gender, and age.
4. Practicing ways to manage other people's prejudices so as to carry on with business in the face of prejudiced clients.
5. Learning to prevent some of the most common mistakes made by driver-deliverers and food preparers in the industry.
6. Introducing the student to the vocabulary related to parts of the body, "accident" verbs, and the reporting of accidents.
7. Learning what are the most common sources of accidents in the food preparation and delivery industry.
8. Writing reports communicating a work-related accident.
9. Identifying and responding to signs warning against possible work-related hazards and injuries.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 6

Module 6 was designed to help the students review the main points taught during the previous five modules. The overall objectives were to reinforce what had already been explained and to make sure that students who joined the program after its inception were not left out of the most important points of the program. By most important points we mean those that: 1- had the greatest immediate relevance and utility to the workers in their everyday duties (their "workplace English") and 2- that proved to be useful for them in everyday life ("general English").

The specific objectives of this module were:

1. The most commonly used vocabulary related to driver-deliverers of Mexican food.
2. Adjectives of expressions used to describe conditions of products.
3. Ways to address customers' complaints and requests.
4. The process of calculating wholesale and retails prices, and the concept of mark-up.
5. Speculating about or giving reasons for events during the work day (the concepts of "if" and "because", i.e., conditionality and causality).
6. Question words and the syntactical patterns of questions in English.
7. Commonly used idiomatic expressions related to usage of time; cultural value of time efficiency in the United States.
8. Good worker traits in the service sector.
9. Reporting states of health and work-related accidents and injuries.
10. Requesting time to speak with management.
11. Vocabulary used in work performance evaluation forms and the American cultural values reflected in them.
12. Practice in writing work performance evaluation forms and the value system that goes behing them.
13. Dealing with prejudice clients and stereotypes they may have of the worker's racial or ethnic group.

MOMENTUM, INC.	
Module 1	A Fashionable Beginning
Module 2	A Stitch of Common Sense
Module 3	Can you help me with fractions?
Module 4	Doing My Job
Module 5	Piecing it all together

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OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 1

Module 1 is designed to familiarize Momentum garment workers with classroom instruction and procedures, review the basic components of written English and the numeric system, introduce some basic sewing terminology and the importance of casual day to day communication in the workplace. The aims of the activities in this module is to enable workers to feel more comfortable in a classroom environment, and initiate or interact with co-workers and superiors in English with greater fluency.

Students will be able to:

1. read and write the English alphabets in upper and lower case forms.
2. associate the most basic English sounds with their corresponding symbols - beginning phonics.
3. read, write, and comprehend ordinal and cardinal numbers.
4. name and ask for common sewing tools politely.
5. ask for repetition during communication breakdowns.
6. initiate and participate in casual small talk with co-workers and superiors.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 2

Module 2 is designed to introduce five new competencies related to the garment making industry while reviewing and reinforcing basic functional language previously taught in Module 1. Workers at Momentum, Inc. will gain competency in recognizing and naming basic colors, articles of clothing, sizes, seasons of the year and parts of the body. Students will broaden their small talk repertoire by learning to compliment each other on their appearances and show concern for each other by asking and responding to questions concerning their health.

The students will be able to:

1. read, write, and comprehend names of basic colors and their abbreviations as they appear on Momentum spec sheets; describe colors they are wearing. New verb: I'm wearing...

2. read, write and comprehend common articles of clothing; name clothing they are wearing. New verbs: put on, take off, I have, I need...

3. make compliments about appearance and clothing; respond appropriately to compliments. New verb: I like...

4. recognize and describe sizes commonly found on clothing labels; describe the fit of clothing they wear. New verb: try on

5. read, write and comprehend the four seasons of the year; catagorize clothing and colors according to seasons. New language: This/that is for summer.

6. name different parts of the body.

7. show concern for each other's health; describe sources of pain and discomfort. New verb: My head hurts.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 3

Module 3 is designed to introduce six new competencies relating to the work and the working culture of Momentum, Inc. while reviewing and reinforcing basic functional language taught in the previous two modules. Workers at Momentum, Inc. will gain competency in describing common physical ailments, expressing sympathy for co-workers with sickness, and calling in sick themselves. Because the company receptionist is often away her desk, the workers will learn to help answer the phone. The class will also learn to use the modal expressing ability and possibility "CAN" to describe what they can/can not do and request for assistance. Finally, Momentum workers will understand the meaning of fractions and gain greater competence in using rulers, yardsticks and measuring tapes.

The students will be able to:

1. recognize and express common physical ailments.
2. express sympathy and concern for co-workers with sickness.
3. call in sick to work.
4. assist in answering the phone and asking callers to call back at a more convenient time.
5. use the modal of ability "CAN" to express things that they can and can not do.
6. use the modal of possibility "CAN" to request for help and guidance.
7. understand the meaning and representation of fractions.
8. comprehend, read and write fractions as they usually appear in their sewing specifications.
9. use rulers, yardsticks, and measuring tapes with greater ease and competence.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 4

Module 4 is designed to introduce four new competencies relating to the work and working environment of Momentum, Inc.. The first unit allows the worker-students to review and apply their knowledge of fractions and use of measuring instruments to measure width, length, height, seam allowances and body parts. Several grammar points are highlighted in this module to bring about greater accuracy in spoken English. The workers will achieve functional competency in describing and responding to common questions regarding their jobs, describing common work procedures, giving instructions, and asking for and responding to requests for help. Finally, in the last unit, the workers will recognize and comprehend special notices and important safety signs around Momentum, Inc..

The students will be able to:

1. measure and respond to questions about seam allowances, the width, and length of garments.

2. measure and respond to questions about body measurements and height.

3. understand and use possessive pronouns (my, your, his, her, and their) in spoken English correctly.

4. understand and use demonstrative adjectives (this, that, these, and those) in spoken English correctly.

5. recognize names of jobs and job duties at Momentum, Inc..

6. introduce themselves and describe their jobs and job duties to people.

7. comprehend and respond to common interrogative questions (who, what, when, where, why, which, how) about their jobs.

8. describe common work activities and procedures (verbs) in simple present and present continuous tense forms:
   Example: I iron shirts every day.
   I'm ironing shirts right now.

9. give instructions using the imperative form:
   Example: Iron the shirts!

9. ask for help and respond to requests for help

10. recognize and understand special notices and safety signs around the sewing factory and the building.

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 5

Module 5 introduces five new competencies related to the work and communication at Momentum, Inc. while reviewing and reinforcing materials taught in the previous four modules. In this module, workers will identify and name fabrics used at Momentum by sight. They will also learn to recognize the written form of fabric names which will inevitably help them in reading the company inventory sheet and clothing labels. Following a unit on reading a simplified company inventory sheet, the workers will learn to identify and name fabric designs used at Momentum and express their opinions on whether designs and colors match well together or not. The longest unit in the module is dedicated to naming basic parts of a garment which will eventually lead to naming parts of a typical Momentum ski jacket. Finally, the last unit touches on describing common sewing problems and suggesting solutions to the described problems.

The students will specifically be able to:

1. recognize and name fabric types used at Momentum.
2. express their opinions on whether the fabric type is easy or difficult to sew.
3. identify the written form of fabric names and learn to read and comprehend a simplified company fabric inventory sheet.
4. read and pick out specified information from clothing labels.
5. interpret the percentages that usually appear on fabric content labels.
6. understand the necessity of company inventory sheets and fill out parts of an inventory grid.
7. identify and name fabric designs used at Momentum and express their opinions on whether certain designs and colors match well or not.
8. identify and name parts of a garment and a typical Momentum ski jacket.
9. describe common sewing problems and suggest solutions to remedy the problems.

Appendix C

Sample Context-Based Assessment Test

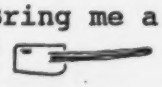
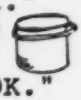
JUST DESSERTS CURRICULUM

PRE-TEST
(MODULE 1 & MODULE 2)

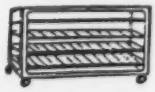
A. LISTENING

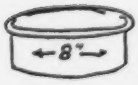
A-1 Listen to the teacher and circle the correct answer.
FOR EXAMPLE: (you hear) "1 Cup."
(you circle) a. 1 P. (b.) 1 C. c. 1 T.

1. a) 9 oz. b) 1.9 oz. c) 9 #
2. a) 2# b) 1/2 # c) 22 #
3. a) 1/2 t b) 1 1/2 t c) 1 t

A-2 Listen to each dialogue and circle the picture, the word, or the sentence you hear.
EXAMPLE 1: (you hear) "Bring me a bucket." "All right."
(you circle) a)  b) (c) 

EXAMPLE 2: (you hear) "Open the oven door please." "OK."
(you circle) (a) Open.
b) Close.
c) Push.

1. a) b)  c)

2. a) b)  c)

3. a) Put
b) Pull
c) Push

4. a) Run the cookie machine for Jose.
b) Come to the cookie machine.
c) Start the cookie machine.

5. a) It is next to the door.
b) They are near the door.
c) It is behind the door.

A-3 Listen to the dialogue between Terry and Maria, then read the following statements.

Check "**YES**" if the statement is true, "**NO**" if not.

	YES	NO
1. Terry talks to Maria.	____	____
2. Maria gives Terry a hand.	____	____
3. Maria should bake the cakes for 20 minutes.	____	____
4. Terry is right.	____	____

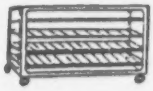
B. MATCHING

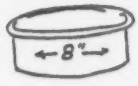
Look at box No. 1. It is a Just Dessert label. The word *label* has been written under the picture.

Look at each picture and write the correct word under the picture. Choose from the words on the left side.

1. 8" cheese cake ring
2. strapped pan
3. loaf
4. sponge
5. spatula
6. label
7. oven rack
8. bread rack
9. frosting wheel

label





C. READING

C-1 Read the paragraphs, then circle the correct answer for each following questions.

1. Jose begins work at 1:30 p.m. Mario begins work at 1:00 p.m. Julio begins work at 11:00 a.m.

1) What time does Mario begin work?

a. 1:30 p.m. b. 1:00 p.m c. 11:00 a.m.

2) Who comes to work first?

a. Jose b. Mario c. Julio

2. The recipe calls for 1 1/2C. of sugar. You add 2C. of sugar. You put _____ sugar.

Which statement is correct?

a) You put **not enough** sugar.
b) You put **too much** sugar.
c) You put **too little** sugar.

C-2 Circle the correct answer to each question.

1. If the batter has too much water it is,

a) thick b) underwhipped c) runny

2. If you have a headache at work, you will

a) go to sleep b) take an aspirin c) tell Terry

3. If you spill something on the floor, you will

a) leave it b) clean it up c) say nothing

4. T means,

a) teaspoon b) Tablespoon c) cup

5. # means

a) inches b) pounds c) quarts

6. **"Scale down" means.**

a) Ok b) make smaller c) make bigger

7. **On the pie crust machine you should use,**

a) 2 hands b) 1 hand c) no hands

C-3 Read the following dialogues between A and B, then fill in the appropriate instructions from the box.

Did you say 5 sheets of chocolate cookies? I'm sorry, I don't understand. What did you say? Ten 8" cheese cake rings?

FOR EXAMPLE:

A: Excuse me, Jose. Take ten 8" cheese cake rings to Luis.
B: ***Ten 8" cheese cake rings?***
A: Right.

1. A: Jose, bring me a strapped pan please.

B: _____?

A: Bring me a strapped pan.

B: OK.

2. A: Jose, please make 5 sheets of chocolate cookies.

B: _____?

A: Right.

3. A: Bring me a ring and put it on the table.

B: _____?

A: Go get a ring for me.

B: OK.

A: And put the ring on the table.

B: No problem.

C-4 The following is a Special Order. Look at this order sheet and answer the following questions.

Prep	bake	frost	sp kit	morn L	D pkg	N pkg
Item:	Cherry pies			Amount:	15	

1. Who works on this order?

_____

2. What is the item?

_____

3. How many pies will you make?

_____

D. WRITING

Think of requests you have made or you have been given in the past. Write 3 requests. Start with the given words as follows.

FOR EXAMPLE: Can you ___*pull the rack to the table*___?

1. Would you _____?

2. Could _____?

3. Excuse me, _____?

OBJECTIVES OF MODULE 2

This module is designed to help LEP employees develop problem solving skills and strategies to improve job performance. The emphasis is on problem solving and communicating with customers. Students will develop skills in identifying and reporting problems to managers, pointing out possible causes of problems, making suggestions, and negotiating with customers.

The material has been designed for students at the high beginning to intermediate level (ESL 100-300 levels).

The specific objectives of this module are:

1. Identify common problems on the job and point out possible causes of the problems.
2. Recognize different degrees of importance of problems.
3. Report typical problems students have at work.
4. Make suggestions or provide input for problem solving.
5. Negotiate with store or restaurant personnel appropriately.
6. Understand the importance of providing quality customer service.

Objectives of Module 1

Module 1 is designed to help Casa Sanchez employees develop communication skills and strategies to perform productively and responsibly on the job. The emphasis in this module is on providing good customer service when Casa Sanchez drivers meet with storekeepers at different sales locations. The drivers will develop skills in handling customer complaints/requests as well as making polite requests themselves.

Students will be able to:

1. name the products they deliver in English.
2. identify and describe problems associated with the products they sell.
3. recognize and comprehend common storekeepers' complaints.
4. respond appropriately to store keepers' complaints.
5. handle store keepers' requests appropriately.
6. make polite requests.
7. recognize and understand the concept of "mark-ups" in pricing products.

Appendix D

Media Coverage of Project EXCEL

Educational Journals

- Henze, Rosemary and Katz, Anne. "What is the Relationship Between Workplace Literacy and Content-Based Instruction?", *The CATESOL Journal*, April 1992, pp. 93-96.

Business and Trade Publications

- Erickson, Pam. "The New Immigrants: how to tap their skills", *Modern Baking*, March, 1992, pp. 52-56.
- Small Business Advisory Commission. "Small Businesses Send School to Employees", *SBAC News*, Fall 1991.
- "Ace Mailer", *San Francisco Business*, May 1991, p. 17.

San Francisco Chronicle

- Sullivan, Kathleen. "Taking pains with workers' English", *San Francisco Examiner*, Tuesday, September 29, 1992, Business Section.
- Sullivan, Kathleen. "English On the Job", *San Francisco Examiner*, Sunday, November 15, 1992, Business Section, pp. E1-E7.

	Degree of Importance				
	Low				High
57. Synthesizing ideas drawn from many sources	1	2	3	4	5
58. Drawing main ideas from readings	1	2	3	4	5
59. Drawing main ideas and details from readings	1	2	3	4	5
60. Reading critically and arguing with author's ideas	1	2	3	4	5
61. Thinking critically and arguing with instructor's ideas	1	2	3	4	5
62. Giving oral presentations	1	2	3	4	5
63. Participating in whole-class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
64. Participating in small-group discussions	1	2	3	4	5
65. Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5
66. Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

Note. From a survey reported in *Assessing and Meeting ESL Learner Needs Across the Disciplines*, by Kate Kinsella, March, 1990. Paper presented at the meeting of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, San Francisco, CA. Adapted by permission.

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The CATESOL Journal

CATESOL EXCHANGE

What is the Relationship Between Workplace Literacy and Content-Based Instruction?

ROSEMARY HENZE AND ANNE KATZ
ARC Associates, Inc., Oakland, CA

Workplace literacy has been defined as

> *... more than just knowing how to read. It's also more than having the narrow skills for a specific job. When we use the term "literacy" we include the full array of basic skills that enable an individual to "use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1985, cited in Sarmiento & Kay, 1990, p. 3)*

In this general definition, the authors conceive of workplace literacy as a benefit to both native speakers and nonnative speakers of English. In this short article, we focus on workplace literacy as it applies to the ESL population. The vignettes that follow give the flavor of two such situations.

> *The room contains long tables placed end to end. Large tinted windows look down over Market Street where tiny pedestrians and cars speed on their way. At 10 minutes before the hour, a few students have already arrived for class, dressed for the work day that will begin at the end of their two-hour block of English for the workplace. The students come from a myriad of language backgrounds and represent a variety of departments and employment positions within this large bank; the one thing they share is a common need to improve their English language skills. By doing so, employees believe they will improve their current job performance and increase their opportunities for advancement. During the class, they will focus on increasing their proficiency using content drawn from the workplace environment—the company newspaper, interactions among employees and between employees and managers, telephone protocols, computer mail. Les-*

sons are based on these real-life uses of language. The two instructors are independent contractors hired by the bank to provide 10 week-long blocks of instruction.

In another part of the city, a small but growing bakery known for its rich desserts made with fresh ingredients employs a production workforce that is Hispanic, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Chinese. While most of the time employees are involved in actions—weighing, mixing, baking, decorating—they also need to be able to use English language skills. They need, among other things, to understand instructions, acquire the ability to read a work order, and follow safety instructions and maintenance work procedures. In worksite-based classes designed on the basis of a "literacy audit," workers develop English language proficiency in areas directly related to the needs of their jobs. Classes are offered in six-week segments, provided by Project EXCEL, a workplace literacy program funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a training program offered by the Career Resources Development Center.

Though a great deal of variation exists among workplace literacy programs, these two serve to illustrate some of the points which we make about the relationship between workplace literacy and content-based approaches. In order to clarify this relationship, we compare the two approaches in terms of several key dimensions: audience, location, purpose, content, and teachers.

Dimensions

Who Is It For? Workplace literacy programs such as the EXCEL program are designed for adults who are working. As we mentioned, the participants may be native speakers of English or they may be in various stages of acquiring English as a second language. Content-based ESL instruction, on the other hand, can be designed for any age group all the way from elementary school children through college students. The participants are by definition acquiring English as a second language.

However, the differences in the two audiences go beyond age and native language. Though rarely articulated, there is an essential class difference in that workplace literacy programs are most often geared for workers such as those in the dessert company example, while content-based instruction is typically designed for students pursuing an academic program. When and if these students eventually join the workforce, they will probably not be working at the lowest levels of the production force. In this sense, the distinction betweeen the two types of programs reflects the vocational/academic split which runs through so much of our educational system. (This is not limited to the U.S. Many if not most other countries make a similar or stronger separation.)

Where Does It Take Place? Workplace literacy programs may take place at a worksite or at a site near the workplace. Content-based ESL programs generally take place in a school or university setting.

What Is the Purpose and Content? Both types of programs make the same basic assumption—that it is better to teach language-related skills in context than in isolation (Mohan, 1986). Thus the purpose of both is to integrate language development with content so that language and/or literacy will be learned in a more meaningful context. In the case of content-based approaches, the content is usually math, science, history, or other academic disciplines. In the case of workplace literacy, the content is the knowledge and skills needed for particular jobs. For example, some of the bank employees needed to learn how to write more effective memoranda. Others needed to improve their skills at decoding and sending computer mail. Still others, customer service representatives, needed to work on telephone protocols for handling customer complaints. All of these employees were working on language set within specific workplace contexts.

How Is the Content Determined? In content-based ESL, academic needs and state frameworks determine the content to be taught, though individual teachers do usually have some flexibility in adapting these frameworks to the proficiency levels and needs of individual classes. In workplace literacy programs, on the other hand, the determination of content depends on two major variables. One of these is the linguistic demands of the particular workplace. To determine these linguistic demands, an instructor or curriculum specialist studies the particular job to find out what kinds of language employees need in order to function effectively in that environment. For example, in the second job situation described above, EXCEL curriculum developers conducted a literacy audit to determine what reading, computation, and communicative skills were required for workers to perform job tasks effectively. EXCEL staff collected all printed materials and observed the working environment on several occasions. They also videotaped and audiotaped the working environment, including workers' performance and communication. These data provided an exhaustive inventory of language functions in the workplace. The other major variable is the level of participants' communicative skills, usually determined through some form of needs assessment at the beginning of the program. The literacy audit, then, provides a specific description of the communicataive demands of the workplace, while the needs assessment looks at students' skills in relation to those workplace demands.

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Who Teaches It? Both content-based ESL and workplace literacy programs use similar teaching configurations. In some cases, a language teacher teams with a content or skills instructor in either the same classroom or separate ones. In other cases, a content or skills instructor who has been trained in language and literacy development assumes responsibility for both content and language. In a third configuration, a language teacher who has a background in a skill or content area assumes full responsibility. No matter what configuration is used, both types of programs require some cross-fertilization of teachers who are skilled in language development and teachers who are skilled in the particular work or content area.

Conclusion

ESL professionals need to consider the relationship between content-based ESL and workplace literacy because the ESL workplace is itself changing. Older students are coming into programs, the numbers of immigrants and refugees are increasing, and employers are beginning in some cases to take over the responsibility for training their workers in language skills. We need to be aware that opportunities exist to work with employers as ESL professionals and to consider the role we as ESL professionals want to play in workplace literacy. Is there a place for us outside of schools and colleges? This brief foray into the world of workplace litracy suggests that there is. ■

References

Mohan, B. M. (1986). *Language and content.* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley

Sarmiento, A. R., & Kay, A. (1990). *Worker-centered learning: A union guide to workplace literacy.* Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute.

The CATESOL Journal

What Do VESL and Content-Based Instruction Have in Common?

KATHLEEN WONG
City College of San Francisco

Vocational English as a second language (VESL) has, in general, been defined as English language instruction that concentrates on the linguistic and cultural competencies requisite for employment. If we assume the definition of content-based instruction to be "the integration of particular content with language-teaching aims" (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, p. 2), then the connection between the two should be obvious. In fact, VESL serves as an excellent example of content-based instruction.

Basically, there are three types of VESL instruction: (a) general VESL, (b) occupational-cluster VESL, and c) occupation-specific VESL.

General VESL refers to language instruction related to finding a job, maintaining a job, and advancing on the career ladder. Known also as prevocational ESL, it is content-based language instruction in so far as it focuses on teaching English in the context of employment. General VESL courses normally introduce language—communicative skills, grammatical structures, vocabulary—and cultural information, all relating to the world of work. For the most part, students enrolling in general VESL have an array of occupational interests. The unifying element is that all of the students seek general work-related language and content. A typical class covers such topics as reading and interpreting want ads, filling out job applications, answering questions for job interviews, and reading and interpreting transportation and schedule information. Other topics might include understanding and giving directions, clarifying information, making excuses, and apologizing.

Developing cultural competency in a general VESL course is as important as developing linguistic competency. Instructors must provide students with pertinent information regarding the workplace culture as an integral component of instruction. The possible areas covered in teaching cultural competency include understanding work schedules, time sheets, paychecks and deductions, benefits, employee forms, safety rules, and unions. This cultural information is taught

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Marketing
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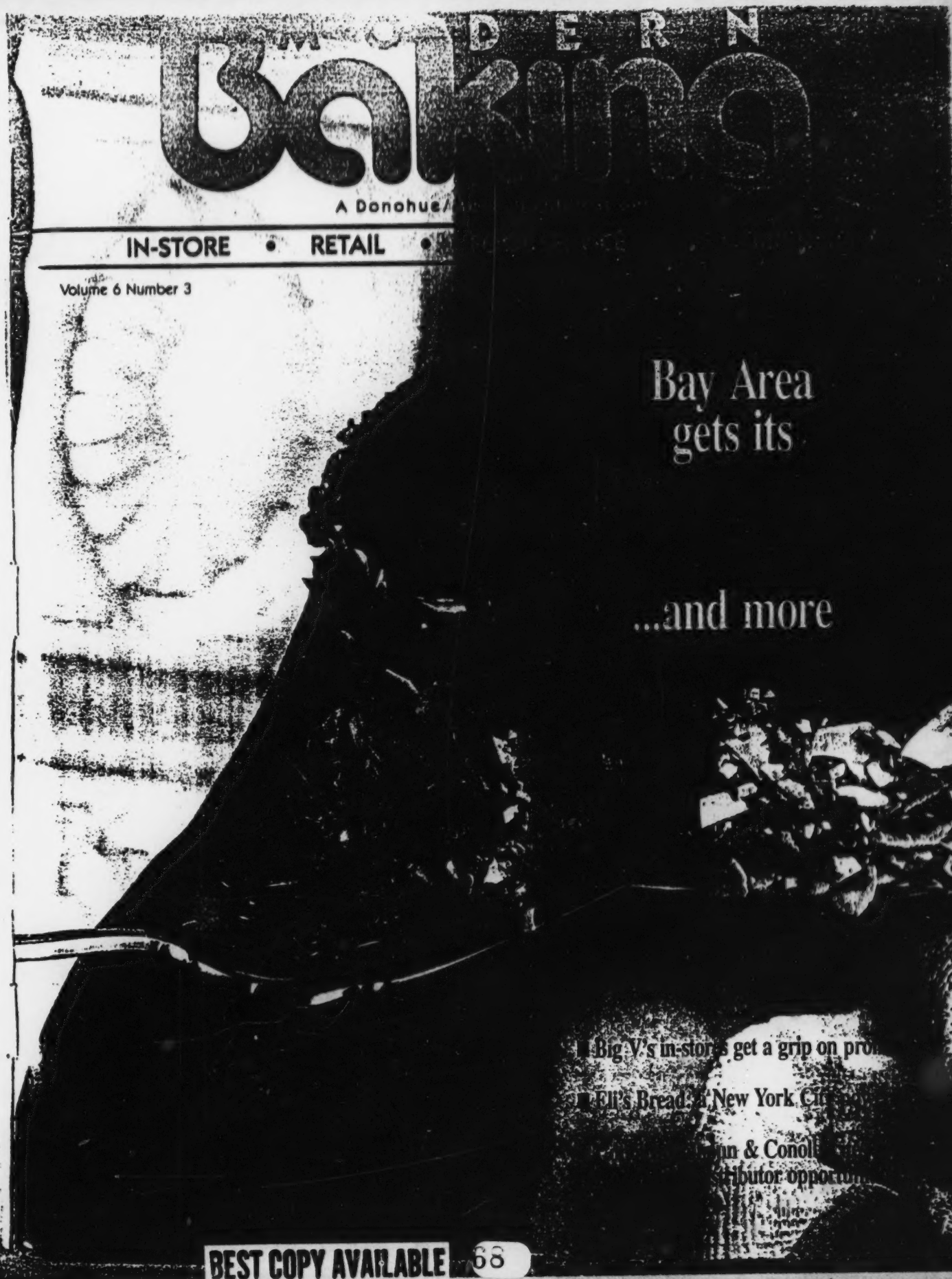

Bay Area gets its

...and more

Big V's in-stores get a grip on pro

Eli's Bread: a New York Cit

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MODERN Baking

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 3 A Donohue/Meehan Publication MARCH

IN-STORE • RETAIL • FOODSERVICE • DISTRIBUTOR

IN-STORE BAKING

Getting a grip on profits 42

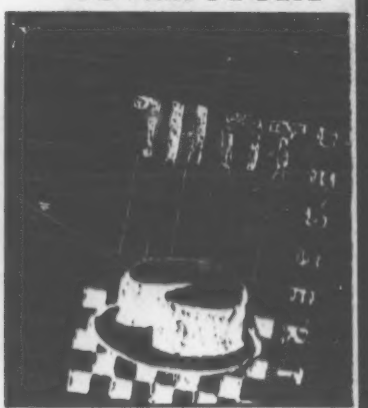
Revamped merchandising, signature products and strong management are pushing Big V in-stores ahead.

P&L IDEAS

The New Immigrants: tap their skills 52

Operators tell how they've bridged cultural differences to create united, productive workplaces.

COVER STORY



Bay Area gets Just Desserts

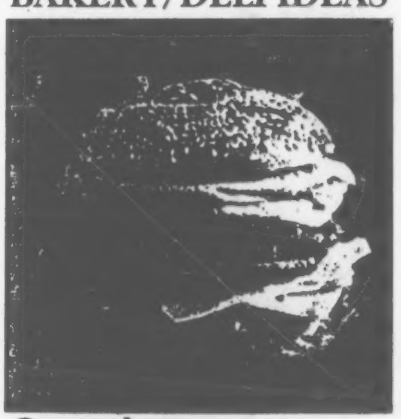
That monicker no longer applies to highly successful San Francisco m unit retailer.

MERCHANDISING

Maximize your selling space 84

Too often, display space is used inefficiently. These ideas could help you gain more sales per square foot.

BAKERY/DELI IDEAS



Grow into your sandwich service 92

There's more to adding a sandwich service than just slapping meat and cheese between slices of bread.

REGIONAL FAVORITI

How breadbasket bakers do it

Specialty breads, white buns/rolls strongly in the east north central gion. Bakers there tell their tactics.

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P&L IDEAS

The New Immigrants: how to tap their skills

Operators tell how they've bridged cultural differences to create united productive workplaces.

By Pam Erickson, contributing editor

He's an employer's dream. Young, strong, hardworking and eager to please, he doesn't mind putting a little extra effort into a job, just to make sure it's done right. He's punctual, dedicated, and willing to learn. There's just one problem: He can't understand a word you're saying.

Bakery operators across the country face this scenario often, and its frequency is sure to increase as the immigrant population grows. This year the United States government will issue 700,000 visas to immigrant workers, up from 500,000 in 1991; current predictions see a work force that is 12% Black, 11% Hispanic and 8% Asian-American by the year 2000.

What's the best way to maximize the potential of these capable newcomers? The answer is the word that has stymied employers for ages. It is the process that is often difficult between persons speaking the same language; toss in a few vernacular and cultural differences and the process can become darn near impossible. This key is Communication.

"Clear, precise communication is so important, particularly in a bakery setting," says Barbara Radcliff, co-founder of Just Desserts in San Francisco. "There are so many things going on at

Communication between Just Desserts' Spanish-speaking employees and American coworkers has improved greatly since the company enrolled in a government-funded literacy program.

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P&L IDEAS

once, so many jobs that are intertwined. Employers need to come up with ways to make sure everyone understands what is happening, whether the employees speak Spanish, Chinese or any other language."

Some companies take a decidedly informal approach to the intercultural communication process. A vice president at a New York-area specialty bread wholesale bakery says his production workers hail from such far-flung regions as Central America, Haiti and Poland, yet little has been done to create a uniform means of information exchange.

"Usually when someone is hired, there is another person on the line that speaks the same language," the executive says. "The established employee then acts as translator for the new worker. We haven't found a need to set up any sort of company-sponsored language program; everyone seems to have worked out their own means of conveying their message. Sometimes it takes a while, but things work out in the end."

When basic is enough

At Minyard Food Stores in Coppell, Texas, bakery director George Timms says his managers use a variety of methods when communicating with employees, many of whom are not native to the United States. "A lot of the people we hire have at least a basic grasp of English—enough to understand basic instructions," Timms says, "but English [proficiency] is not required. Some managers are bilingual, while others use another employee to translate. In other cases, particularly in production areas, motions and gestures get the point across."

Other bakery operations have opted to eliminate language barriers early in the hiring process. "The English language is the common denominator among all our employees," says Marjorie Shaffer, bakery specialist with Petrini's supermarkets in San Rafael, Calif., an operation where many workers have immigrated from India, Central America and Vietnam. "By requiring that everyone speaks English up front, you can avoid miscommunication problems further down the line."

Then there are those companies where cross-cultural communication has simply become a way of life. At Il Fornaio, San Francisco, production manager Jan Schat says a large percentage of his work force is Central American; hence, many managers speak both Spanish and English. Company policy also requires written communication to be bilingual. "By meeting our employees' language needs, we help ensure they'll meet our needs for quality work."

Another Bay Area baking operation has taken its bilingual program one step further by participating in a pilot language program administered through the U.S. Department of Education. Several Hispanic employees at Just Desserts have begun participating in Project EXCEL, a program aimed at improving literacy and basic skills training for people with limited English proficiency (see accompanying sidebar).

Program a "great help"

Just Desserts' Radcliff says her company began working with the program last year. "We've had several employees complete the first two modules, and [recently began] a third," she says, noting that instruction was halted from October to January to accommodate increased production needs. "The program has been a great help in improving communication between English-speaking managers and Hispanic employees."

Just Desserts employees committed to 'excel'lence

Like the Berlin Wall, the language barrier between English and Spanish speaking employees at Just Desserts is tumbling down, thanks to a new program administered through the U.S. Department of Education.

Called Project EXCEL, the program enhances participants' English language skills. But unlike other English-as-a-second-language classes, the project is worksite specific; curricula are designed individually, to ensure the needs of each participating company are accurately met.

"We contacted Just Desserts last year," says Mabel Teng, project director at the Career Resources Development Center, the agency which implements Project EXCEL in the Bay Area. "They are a growing business, and they employ many Latino and Asian workers. Our program is helping their work force become more sophisticated, so they can be better prepared to meet the increasing demands of their jobs."

Teng says Project EXCEL personnel visited Just Desserts many times when designing the company's curriculum, thus creating a program that addresses many communication needs. The first module of training, conducted last summer, covered basic bakery vocabulary and conversation; the second module promoted a more complete understanding of bakery terms. The third module, currently underway, addresses the working culture of Just Desserts, focusing on topics considered important to management, such as "how to be a better worker," Teng says.

Each module lasts six weeks, and consists of two 1 1/2-hour classes per week, for a total of 18 hours of instruction per module. Modules average 17 participants each.

Teng says Just Desserts contributes a conference room plus relief time for participating workers; all other costs of administering the program are underwritten by government funds. She estimates the value of such instruction at $150 per classroom hour.

Bakery operators interested in participating in Project EXCEL or similar programs can contact Teng at the CRDC, 655 Geary St., San Francisco, Calif. 94102; telephone (415) 775-8880.

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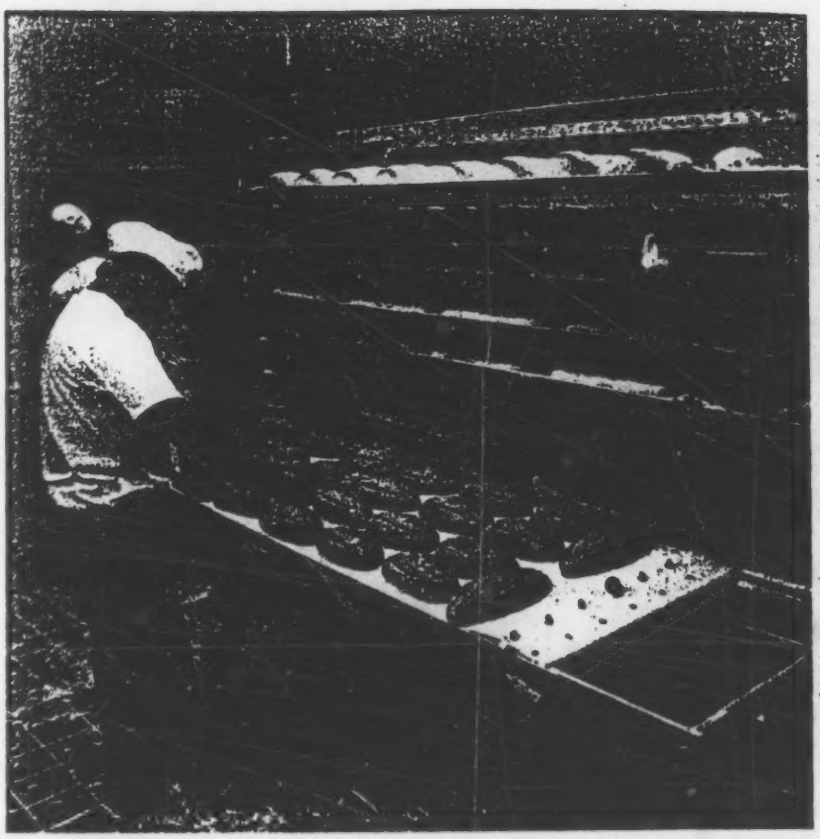

At Il Fornaio, San Francisco, a large percentage of the work force is Central American; hence, many managers speak both Spanish and English and all written communications must be bilingual.

Although language is the foremost obstacle to clear communication between employers and recently immigrated employees, cultural differences can also stand in the way. An East Coast retail baker says he once ended up firing a dishwasher, not because the man was a poor worker, but because he repeatedly disobeyed the orders given by his manager, a woman. "In certain cultures, the males call all the shots and some guys, even after they've moved to this country, just can't get away from that way of thinking," the bakery owner notes.

Barbara Radcliff adds that certain immigrants, in keeping with the teachings of their native cultures, tend to be more reserved than their American coworkers. Questions and opinions sometimes are left unspoken, causing a communication gap. "Some people are hesitant to ask questions or communicate their desires because they feel it is not their place to converse freely with their employers," she says. "We like to feel we're a very open company; we welcome input from all employees. But we find ourselves constantly reinforcing this belief to our employees."

Illegals "not worth the risk"

On the issue of legality, all bakery operators interviewed were adamant: Immigrant workers must display adequate proof of residency before they can be considered for a position. "Even though [illegal aliens] will work for practically peanuts, they are not worth the risk," says a Southern California specialty wholesaler. "We require written proof of legal residency—no exceptions."

Once documentation has been established, many immigrants move on to become highly regarded members of a bakery's work force. Punctuality, a strong work ethic and perseverance were the favorable traits most often mentioned. "Many immigrants we've hired have been very stable," says Schat at Il Fornaio. "You hire them, you train them, and they stay with you for a long time. The American work force tends to be a little more transient."

Petrini's Shaffer echoes Schat's remarks, and adds that newcomers are frequently less demanding than American coworkers. "They don't walk up to you with a list of requested time off," she says, adding, "As long as you respect them as capable, qualified human beings—as you should any employee—they'll give you 100% in return."

Bob Wedeking, owner of Wedeking's Bakery, Escondido, Calif., says he has employed many immigrants throughout the years, with the majority coming from nearby Mexico. He says many have been great employees, but cautions against assuming that 'recent immigrant' equals 'dedicated staff member.'

"People are people, whether they're born in the United States, Mexico or somewhere else," he says. "Some are good, some are bad. I had one immigrant employee who just didn't want to work; I eventually caught him stealing and fired him. But that doesn't mean all immigrants are that way."

Wedeking says that the hiring process should be the point where undesirable candidates are eliminated. "Just do your homework," he notes.

With the immigrant population ever increasing, the face of the bakery work force is changing. Language and cultural barriers might arise, but none are too steep to overcome. With a little effort on the part of employers and employees, immigrant workers can become an integral part of the baking team. MB

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SBAC NEWS

KEEPING SMALL BUSINESS WORKING

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMISSION Copyright 1991 City and County of San Francisco Fall 1991

SMALL BUSINESSES SEND SCHOOL TO EMPLOYEES

Recently, several small businesses have begun to participate in Project EXCEL, a unique workplace literacy partnership operated by the San Francisco Career Resources Development Center (CRDC). The U.S. Department of Education has selected CRDC, a non-profit educational organization, to implement Project EXCEL, which focuses upon literacy and basic skills training for workers with limited English proficiency.

Four San Francisco businesses are involved: Ace Mailing, Casa Sanchez, Just Desserts, and Momentum. The emphasis is upon workplace communication, so that the needs of the worker and the business are met.

Gwen Kaplan, owner of Ace Mailing and the president of the Small Business Advisory Commission, had been looking for just such a program for eight years. "I was trying to implement some type of educational program for workers when Mabel Teng [director of Project EXCEL] walked through my door to tell me about Project EXCEL. The timing couldn't have been better."

The partnership between Project EXCEL and small businesses is distinctive. The first step is needs assessment and task analysis. CRDC staff members interview workers and managers in each business, then design a curriculum around the specific needs of the company and its workers. This allows precise development of individuals and businesses.

"Often, you find everything you are looking for in an employee, but they may not speak English well enough to communicate their ideas or to train others," notes Gwen. "This is where the emphasis upon workplace literacy is vital."

CRDC devises the curriculum and provides the teachers. The business designates the site and schedule. Classes usually take three to five hours each week at a time determined by the business.

The outcome of this cooperative effort is a harmonious blend of mutual benefits. Project EXCEL enables employees to be more effective workers, increases business productivity, and provides longer term improvements in increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover.

For more information, contact Mabel Teng, Executive Director, CRDC. 655 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. (415) 775-8880. •

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ACE MAILER

Gwen Kaplan, Ace Mailing – Excellence in Business Award

Gwen Kaplan welcomes a visitor to Ace Mailing headquarters on 16th Street. The founder and owner of the direct marketing company is trying to wrap things up before taking a vacation. And when you have as many irons in the fire as Kaplan, wrapping up is no easy task.

She has just come from a meeting to plan Ace Mailing's participation in EXCEL, a program that provides academic training in the work place. Her energy and enthusiasm for the project are typical of Kaplan.

"For years I've been whooping and hollering that a small business can train people in job skills, but we can't go back and give them a high school education," she declares. "This program is great, because the only thing that will work is training in the workplace."

Kaplan: A knack for matching business and community needs.

Over the past 12 years, as Ace Mailing has grown into a multimillion-dollar company, Kaplan has managed to match the needs of her growing business with the needs and resources of the local community. "I guess it's my background," says Kaplan, a self-described "Prop 13 victim," who spent 10 years as a social worker before government cutbacks ended that career.

When Kaplan launched Ace Mailing in a small space in Fort Mason Center, for instance, she recruited her startup labor from a nearby senior citizens' center. Later, the firm moved into larger quarters in the Mission District and Kaplan joined forces with Arriba Juntos, a job training agency in the Mission, and the Private Industry Council. With their help, she hired and trained folks like Ace Mailing's current production manager, who was unemployed, had no skills and no high school diploma when he joined the company six years ago.

Such efforts are classic examples of enlightened self-interest. "Yes, I believe our mission on earth is to take care of each other," says Kaplan. "But it's really a two-way street. It's good for Ace Mailing as well. We have tremendously dedicated, extremely committed employees. Turnover can kill a small company, and our turnover is very low."

Originally, Ace targeted an unfilled niche in the direct mail market for relatively small jobs — for firms that mailed 100,000 pieces or less. Its client list has since grown to include local corporate giants like Bank of America, Chevron and Pacific Bell, and public-sector heavy-hitters such as BART and the University of California. However, Kaplan is determined to keep her customer base diversified. "We do everything from voter pamphlets to mailings of 200 hand-addressed envelopes," she says. With a mix of large and small clients in a broad range of industries, Ace insulates itself from downturns. Its fortunes aren't tied to those of one big client or one industry.

As Ace prospered, Kaplan began to tackle small business issues. "When you can lose your business because of a handful of regulations, then, buddy, you had better get involved in the public sector," she says. Kaplan is president of the City of San Francisco's Small Business Advisory Commission, and is a tireless advocate for small business.

Her agenda for small business is wide ranging, but it's rooted in an underlying theme. "Small business is such a vibrant part of the community," she says. "We're like seedlings. We have to be nurtured."

Meanwhile, Kaplan's community involvement continues unabated. Awards and citations line the walls in Ace Mailing's conference room As far as Kaplan is concerned, good works simply make good business sense. "I just won't accept the notion that business people are bad guys."

SFB

Photo by Holman Turner

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San Francisco Examiner, Tuesday, September 29, 1992 [Business Section]

Taking pains with workers' English

Bay Area firms push improving language skills — on company time

By Kathleen Sullivan
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

All over the Bay Area — in hotels, bakeries, printing shops and computer companies — small groups of employees are meeting on company time to take English language classes.

It's happening in the housekeeping department at the Sheraton Palace Hotel. In kitchens at Just Desserts. In production rooms at Golden Dragon Printing. In offices at Sun Microsystems.

At a recent daylong seminar in downtown San Francisco, experts said companies were turning their employees loose to study English for a very self-serving reason: It makes good business sense. That's the attitude at Sun Microsystems Inc., a Mountain View computer company.

Peter Smith, Sun's director of training and development, said the classes built confidence and improved teamwork among its highly educated engineers. Sun offers classes in English as a second language, foreign accent improvement, and clear writing for foreign-born employees.

Smith said effective communication was key to getting ahead at Sun. "If you can't communicate in a company like Sun, it's going to stifle your career," he said.

Improving English-speaking skills isn't the only focus of language classes. For many immigrants, the classes are an introduction to the "American" way of doing things. Teachers help students understand American culture, how working in the United States is different from working in their native countries — and how to cope with those differences.

Santiago Rodriguez, manager of multicultural programs at Apple Computer Inc., said the concept of self-promotion was common in the United States, but was discouraged in the Latino culture in which he was raised. Since self-promotion is a necessity at Apple, Rodriguez said he had had to learn how to adapt. "I focus on my ideas, not myself," he said.

EXAMINER/MARK COSTANTINI

Santiago Rodriguez *manages multicultural programs at Apple.*

To be successful, a program must be tailored to the particular needs of workers. Pennie Lau, a curriculum coordinator at Career Resources Development Center, said the nonprofit group interviewed managers and workers before designing classes.

Its teachers also "shadow" workers, working alongside them while they bake pastries or clean bathtubs, so they can get a first-hand look at their daily interactions and tailor the class to their needs.

Barbara Byrd, head of the Labor Studies Department at City College of San Francisco, said ma-

[See ENGLISH, C-5]

◆ ENGLISH from C-1

Taking pains with workers' English

ny employees felt anxious wh their boss told them the compa was starting English language cl sses.

They worry that they will penalized on the job if they do do well in class — or worse, th they will lose their jobs if th English doesn't improve.

Unions and community grou can be invaluable allies in winni over an anxious group of emplo ees, Byrd said. They can also he design a program suited to t unique needs of the workers a cultures represented in the wo force.

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San Francisco Examiner

Sunday
NOVEMBER 15, 1992
FINAL
EDITION

EXAMINER/JOHN STOREY

All over The City, hotel employees are polishing up their English — at work — in language classes specifically geared to their work-a-day needs. The program, created by the Career Resources Development Center, has won kudos from hotel executives, union officials and employees — Japanese chefs, Chinese maids and Hispanic laundry workers. [*E-1*]

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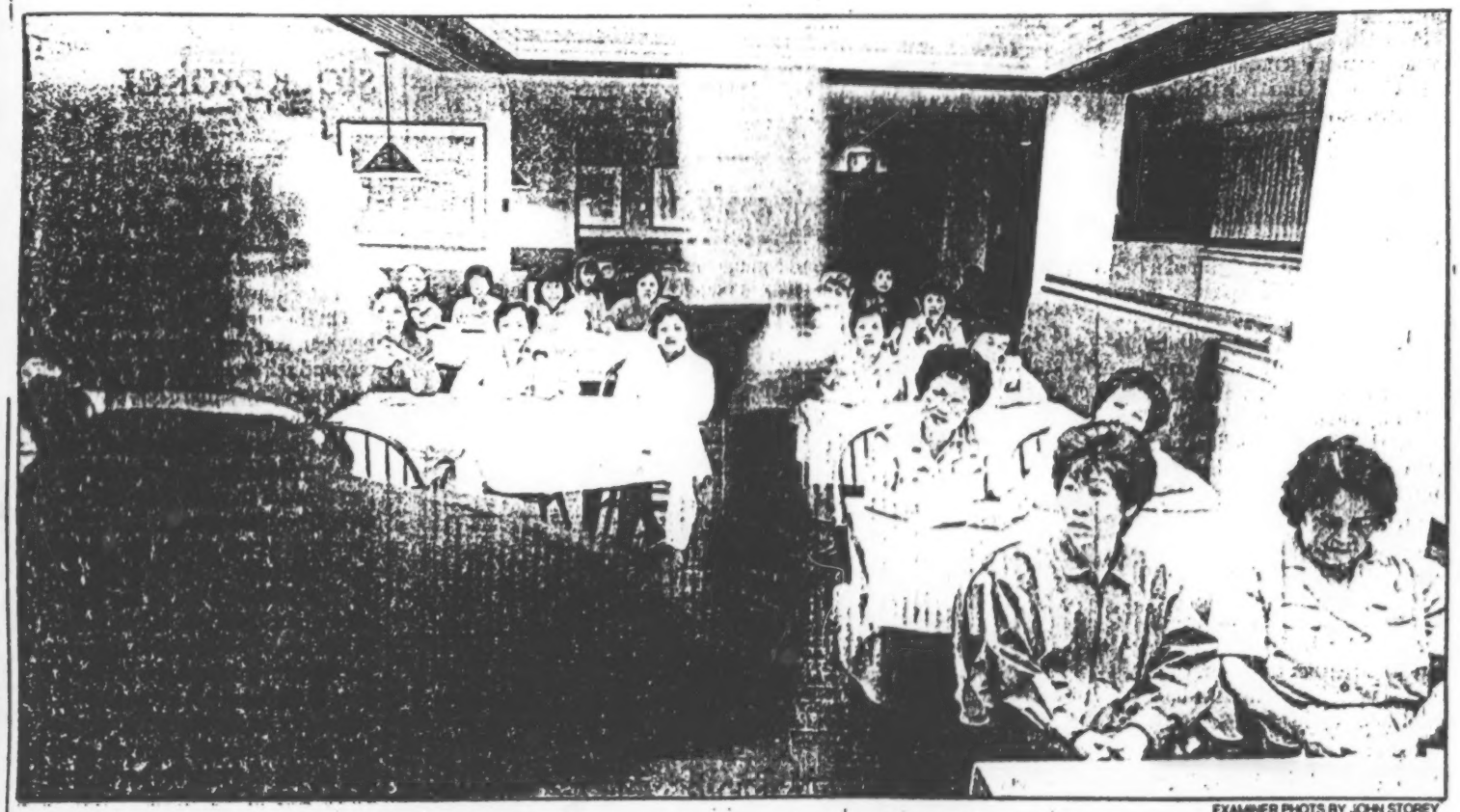
LANGUAGE CLASSES HELD AT WORK SITES

English on the job



EXAMINER PHOTS BY JOHN STOREY

Oscar Ramirez *holds up flash cards to help Holiday Inn/Fisherman's Wharf employees learn English in classes held at the hotel after their shift.*

San Francisco Examiner
BUSINESS

By Kathleen Sullivan
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

PENNIE LAU never knows for sure what kind of outfit she'll need for work. It could be a white laundry overcoat. A blue maid's dress. Or a steward's brown jumpsuit.

Lau wears whatever uniform she needs to blend in with her students as she observes them working at San Francisco hotels — pressing linens, scrubbing bathtubs, washing china plates. Or, in the case of the Kyo-Ya Restaurant, Lau played a well-dressed customer bantering with sushi chefs as they prepared orders of *hamachi, amaebi* and *negi-toro.*

Lau is an English instructor at the Career Resources Development Center, a nonprofit Bay Area group that is conducting language classes in local hotels under a federal workplace literacy grant. It is one of several programs offered by the 26-year-old job-training group.

She said observing employees at work is the best way find out what communication skills — reading, writing and speaking — they use on the job. It's one of the first steps in creating English classes specifically geared to their work-a-day needs.

Lau said the classes she prepared for a trio of Kyo-Ya chefs were designed to help them greet customers, take orders, work with fellow employees, and to answer myriad questions — "What does flying fishroe taste like? Where does your sea eel come from? What kind of *maki* do you have? Which part of Japan are you from? Who designed this restaurant?"

Akifusa Tonai, Kyo-ya's assistant sous chef, said the classes helped boost the confidence of the sushi chefs, who have a lot of contact with customers, because it gave them the chance to practice answering typical questions asked by customers.

CRDC has received $431,000 from the U.S. Department of Edu-

[*See ENGLISH, E-6*]

Sue Kwan *listens to the teacher; workers use new language skills at work.*

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EXAMINER/KATY RADDATZ

Sushi chefs *at the Palace Hotel: Takeo Kiku, left, teacher Pennie Lau, Akifusa Tonai; seated, Masami Ishii.*

Ramirez said the classes encompass a wide range of topics. "We've taught everything from using fractions in a bakery to warding off sexual harassment by hotel guests," he said.

Ramirez, who has taught languages for 13 years, said hotel workers face the same struggles as college students trying to master new sounds, words and sentence structures. Some hotel workers have a knack for English; some don't. Some bravely chatter away in class, not worried about making mistakes; others must be coaxed to participate, and then pronounce words perfectly in a quiet voice.

Learning English at work can be a springboard to further study. CRDC's courses are short, lasting eight to 10 weeks, but during that time some employees discover that English isn't as hard as they thought it would be. "It only whets their appetite for more," said Drew Westveer, who recently finished teaching a class to laundry workers at the San Francisco Hilton. "They want to continue."

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◆ *ENGLISH from E-1*

English taught at job sites

cation to offer English classes at six hotels — and the only San Francisco nonprofit group that received funding. The Mayor's Office contributed another $60,000. Last year, the group conducted classes at Ace Mailing; Casa Sanchez, a Mexican food manufacturer; Jeanne-Marc, a women's clothing maker; Momentum, a skiwear designer; and Just Desserts bakery.

The classes represent an innovative approach to teaching English. The lessons are held at work, immediately before or after a shift. The program focuses on entry-level employees, whose needs are often overlooked by other language programs. CRDC doesn't charge for the classes, but hotels must pay employees for at least half of the time they spend in class.

Community colleges offer English classes at local businesses for a fee.

Hotel executives said they decided to take part in the program for business and altruistic reasons.

Tom Passantino, director of training at the Sheraton Palace Hotel, said its employees with limited English couldn't communicate well with guests, supervisors and, in some cases, workers in the same department. In a hotel, where service is key to a guest's satisfaction, communication is critical. And even the simplest gesture — returning a guest's greeting — could ensure that a guest returns.

He said the program requires sacrifices by both management and employees. Supervisors juggle schedules so that a dozen people from the same department can leave work early twice a week; employees stay late to attend class.

Passantino said accidents dropped to zero in the laundry department after the class.

Janet Braun, director of human resources for the Holiday Inn on Union Square, said the classes can also enrich the personal lives of its staff in practical and profound ways. "Many of our employees left their native countries for freedom in the United States," Braun said. "If they don't speak English, they don't have freedom."

Rafael Espinoza, vice president of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, said workers learn valuable language skills in the classes, and perhaps more importantly, gain a sense of belonging. "When management offers English classes, they're showing that they accept the employees for who they are," he said. "That makes people feel like part of the team."

Immigrants who speak English well also have the opportunity to advance at work. Those who don't often get stuck in entry-level positions, and some end up spending 25 years in the same job, said Mabel Teng, CRDC's executive director, who designed the group's program, known as Project Excel.

Lessons used immediately

Experts say tailoring English classes to work gives language lessons a relevance not always found in traditional classes. Students in CRDC's classes learn useful words and sentences they can use immediately — every day.

Unlike college students, whose "job" is studying, full-time workers must carve time out of their busy lives for classes. Many hotel workers juggle English lessons with long work hours and family responsibilities. Some hold two jobs. Many live far from work and spend a long time commuting by bus to their jobs.

Oscar Ramirez, one of five CRDC instructors, said teachers face challenges, too.

Usually, their students cannot be separated into beginning, intermediate and advanced classes, so all levels must be addressed in a single class. Attendance may drop suddenly if hotel business drops and employees are laid off. The teachers can't rely on homework to reinforce lessons, or the threat of a poor grade to motivate students.

In a recent class at the Holiday Inn, the lesson focused on two kinds of guests — those with problems and those with requests. Holding up oversized flashcards with room numbers and pictures — a torn shower curtain, a plugged sink, an ironing board, a baby crib — Ramirez asked: "Is this a problem or a request? What's wrong? What does the guest want?"

Roll-playing on the phone

Then Ramirez paired up students in a role play at the front of the class — room cleaner and supervisor — so they could practice reporting different situations over the phone. Speaking a foreign language on the phone is hard, Ramirez said, because accents are distorted and physical cues — facial expressions and gestures — are invisible.

With a little friendly persuasion, Ramirez convinced several students to act in the skit. As he corrected their pronunciation and phone manners, he delivered a steady stream of encouragement and jokes. "This is almost like a Hollywood movie," he cracked, much to the delight of his students.

Poy Ngor Chan, a room cleaner at the Holiday Inn on Union Square, said she wants to be able to tell supervisors about a stopped-up toilet or a dirty bedspread, instead of showing them the problem. She said the classes will help her respond to requests from guests, who often ask for her for directions to Chinatown and restaurant recommendations.

Teaching colloquial expressions is also important. Ramirez recalled an incident in which a guest told a maid to deliver two more towels on the double. She delivered four. And because she didn't realize what "on the double" meant, she took her time delivering them, greatly upsetting the guest.

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SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

★ ★ Sunday, November 15, 1992 E-7

Laundry list of language

Instructors use work-related vocabulary to help hotel employees learn English

By Kathleen Sullivan
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

TEACHERS OSCAR Ramirez and Drew Westveer had to do a little homework before they could begin teaching English to laundry workers.

Their assignment: To follow a bundle of dirty linen — bathmats, washcloths, towels, sheets and pillowcases — from the time it tumbled down the soiled linen chute on the 30th floor of the San Francisco Hilton Hotel until it emerged sparkling clean from the laundry.

Ramirez and Westveer work at the Career Resources Development Center, a Bay Area non-profit group that was awarded a federal workplace literacy grant to teach English to hotel workers.

To pursue the dirty laundry, they marched downstairs and watched workers separate the linen into roll-away carts. They trooped down another floor and saw employees pulling chains that dumped loads of sheets into giant washing machines. They observed workers pinning damp sheets onto a machine that dried and folded the linen. They watched other employees counting bundles of sheets and stacking them on carts.

All the while, Ramirez and Westveer were asking questions and taking notes. They drew up detailed job descriptions, including common nouns, verbs and adjectives used to describe the work, the linen and the laundry machines. They gathered work schedules and other documents. They took photographs. They created diagrams showing the daily interaction between employees and fellow workers, supervisors and guests. They recorded snippets of English dialogue.

All of the information became fodder for teaching materials and classroom instruction. It takes a lot of work to design a class tailored to the needs of one particular group of workers, but Ramirez said it's worth the effort. "The more employees see that what they're doing in class is related to what they do on the job, the better they respond," he said.

Appendix E

Evaluation Tools

PROJECT EXCEL

Worker Productivity Self-Assessment Checklist

Name of Worker:
Nombre del Trabajador:
姓名：

Date / *Fecha* / 日期 :

Please read each question and circle the answer to show how you feel.
Favor de marcar el número que mejor refleja su competencia.
請仔細閱讀每題的敍述，並圈出適合你的號碼.

	Poorly *Dificilmente* 極差				Well *Bien* 極佳
1. I can communicate with my co-workers in English. *Puedo comunicarme con mis compañeros en inglés.* 我可以用英文和同事交談.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can communicate with my boss in English. *Puedo comunicarme con mi jefe en inglés.* 我可以用英文和上司交談.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can read job orders in English. *Puedo leer órdenes en inglés.* 我可以閱讀和工作有關的英文指示.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I ask questions in English when I don't understand. *Hago preguntas en inglés cuando no entiendo.* 若有疑難，我可以用英文發問.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can do different jobs if the boss asks me to in English. *Puedo desempeñar varios trabajos si el jefe me los pide en inglés.* 我可以明白上司的英文指示而勝任較困難的工作.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I think that I could move up in the company. *Creo que podría avanzar en la compañía.* 我認為我有能力獲得升遷機會.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My reading skills in English are. . . . *Mi habilidad para leer en inglés es de. . . .* 我的英文閱讀能力是 …	1	2	3	4	5
8. My writing skills in English are. . . . *Mi habilidad para escribir en inglés es de. . . .* 我的英文書寫能力是 …	1	2	3	4	5

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Supervisor's Worker Productivity Assessment Checklist

Name of Worker_____

Name of Supervisor_____

Date_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question. Then circle the number of the answer that best describes your assessment of this worker's productivity.

1. Can communicate with co-workers. . .

Poorly				Well
1	2	3	4	5

2. Can communicate with supervisor. . .

Poorly				Well
1	2	3	4	5

3. Can read the job-related materials. . .

Poorly				Well
1	2	3	4	5

4. Asks questions when doesn't understand. . .

Never				Always
1	2	3	4	5

5. Can do different jobs if asked to. . .

Never				Always
1	2	3	4	5

6. Could move up and do a more challenging job. . .

Poorly				Well
1	2	3	4	5

7. Reading skills are. . .

Poor				Good
1	2	3	4	5

8. Writing skills are. . .

Poor				Good
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:_____

_____

Form SWP

Worker Program Evaluation Summary Group Interview Form

Name of Firm_____

No. of Workers_____

Date_____

INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWER: Please ask each question to the worker class group. Translate as needed. Responses may be in any language Then take notes on the responses in the space provided.

1. What did you expect when this program started? Was it what you thought?

2. What about the kind of English you learned in the program? Was it what you wanted to learn? How should we change it?

3. What did you think of the schedule of the program? Was it at the right times for you? What problems did you have in coming to class?

3. Do you think your language skills have improved? Can everybody give at least one example?

4. Do you think your productivity has improved? Can everybody give at least one example?

5. Has anybody started to study English in another program since starting this program? Where?

5. Can you give 2 or 3 examples of good things that happened because of the program?

6. Pretend that tomorrow you become the teacher for this class. Can you give 2 or 3 ideas for how to make the class better for the students?

Form WSI